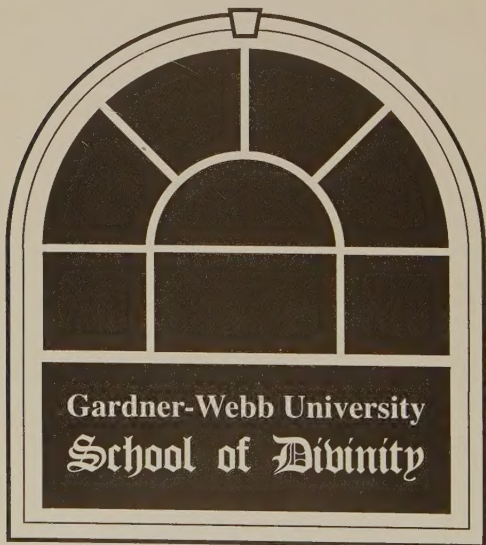


ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

FREDERIC BREADING OXTOBY

School of Divinity



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ISRAEL'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

A Survey of the Development of the Old Testament
with a Discussion of Its Significant
Moral and Spiritual Values in
Religious Education

By

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TO MY WIFE
FRIEDA BOYNTON OXToby

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INTRODUCTION

Provision is made in the Standard Leadership Training Curriculum for two units, one required and one elective, covering the development of the Hebrew religion as recorded in the Old Testament. Manifestly no one can hope in the time assigned to make a careful study of Old Testament history. It is assumed that much of the detail knowledge of this history has already been secured in the work of the Church school. These units, then, are intended to help the future leader to grasp something of the sweep of religious development as recorded in the Old Testament books and to come to some clearer understanding of the part played in this development by patriarch, poet, and prophet. This text is prepared to assist the pupil to obtain this orienting view.

The twenty-four chapters of this text may be offered as one unit of the Standard Course — Unit 3. In this case twelve periods should be spent on the text and the chapters combined into twelve assignments. When used as a two-unit course twenty-four hours of class work should be given. This makes it possible to do a considerably greater amount of reading and study of the Old Testament itself and is to be recommended when time permits.

Especial attention should be given to the suggestions for further study. Dr. Oxtoby has here offered

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direction which will enable future teachers to add that richness to their teaching background which so often constitutes the difference between success and failure in leadership.

J. S. ARMENTROUT,
Director of Leadership Training.

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE

Through the chosen people, the Hebrews, God made the supreme revelation of himself; he made this revelation especially through the Hebrew prophets, and, in a unique way, through his Son. From the creation of the universe to the fulfillment of prophecy in the fullness of time by Jesus Christ, when "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us," one sees the purpose of God being carried out. "The Bible is the inspired record of God's gradual revelation of himself, his nature, character, and will — a revelation made in the first instance to a people who were chosen to be the guardians of this treasure and to communicate it in due time to the rest of mankind; a revelation consummated in the person, life, and work of Jesus Christ."

The Hebrew Bible. There are sixty-six books in the English Bible, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament. The thirty-nine books in the English Old Testament were counted in the Hebrew Bible as twenty-four books, and were put into a threefold division, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, the order after the first five books being quite different from that of the English Old Testament. The arrangement was as follows:

1. The Law (Torah), which included the five books from Genesis to Deuteronomy: Genesis, Exodus, Le-

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viticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. These books are called the Pentateuch. In the Hebrew Bible the first five books of the Old Testament are named as follows: Genesis is called, "In the beginning"; Exodus is, "And these the names"; Leviticus is, "And he called"; Numbers is, "In the wilderness"; Deuteronomy is, "These the words." The names are the opening words of each book except in the case of Numbers where the name is the fifth word.

2. The Prophets (*Nebim*), eight books. This division included the books of the English Bible from Joshua to II Kings except Ruth, and from Isaiah to Malachi except Lamentations and Daniel. "The Prophets" was divided into two groups: "The Former Prophets," the four narrative or historical books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (the two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings forming originally each a single book); and "The Latter Prophets," four books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve Prophets (the twelve Minor Prophets forming a single book).

3. The Writings (Ketubim, or, Greek, Hagiographa, "Sacred Writings"), eleven books. To this division belong the three poetical books — Psalms, Proverbs and Job; the five rolls (Megilloth) read publicly in the synagogues at certain sacred seasons: Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs) at the passover, Ruth at Pentecost, Lamentations on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem, Ecclesiastes at the feast of tabernacles, Esther at the feast of Purim; and the three remaining books, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah (forming one book), and Chronicles (forming one book).

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Lost Sources. Certain books now lost are referred to as sources in the Old Testament: "the book of the wars of Jehovah," quoted in Num. 21:14, 15, probably "a collection of songs celebrating ancient victories gained by Israel over its enemies"; "the book of Jashar" (or "The Upright" — probably a title for Israel), Josh. 10:13; II Sam. 1:18, probably a collection of national songs celebrating the deeds of worthy Israelites; "the book of the acts of Solomon," I Kings 11:41; "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" and "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah," the former mentioned in I and II Kings seventeen times, the latter fifteen times; "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" mentioned in Chronicles, not the existing book of Kings.

Order of Books in the English Old Testament. The Septuagint Version (abbreviated LXX — so called from the traditional belief that seventy scribes were employed in its production) was a complete translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language, made in Egypt in the third to the first century B.C. for the Jews of Alexandria, who used Greek as their native tongue. Greek was the first foreign language into which the Old Testament was translated. Most of the quotations taken from the Old Testament which appear in the New Testament were taken from the Septuagint Version, not from the Hebrew Old Testament. The Septuagint disregarded the Hebrew threefold division, and sought to group the books according to contents or subject matter into divisions of narrative or historical, poetical, and prophetical books. This

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grouping according to contents is the arrangement followed in the English Old Testament. The narrative or historical books include Genesis through Esther; the poetical books, Job through Song of Solomon; the prophetical books, Isaiah through Malachi.

The Names "Old Testament" and "Bible." The name "Old Covenant" or "Old Testament" was first given to all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures in the second century A.D. Later Greek writers came to use the term *ta Biblia*, meaning "the Books," for the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments. Later the plural, *Biblia*, the Books, in its Latin form came to be regarded as a singular from which we get the name "Bible," the Book. Jerome in the fourth century A.D. used for the whole Bible the collective name, "Divine Library." In the New Testament the Old Testament books are referred to usually as "the scriptures" ("writings"), as in Acts 17:11. "Scripture" is commonly used for a special passage as in Luke 4:21. The contents of the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible are referred to in Luke 24:44, "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms," The Psalms being the first book of the third division and II Chronicles the last. See Matt. 23:35: the murder of Abel is in the first book, Genesis; the murder of Zechariah is in the last book, II Chronicles.

The Bible in the Time of Christ. The Old Testament was the Bible of Christ and of the writers of the books of the New Testament. In the time of Christ the Old Testament was in the form of leather rolls, one

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roll containing the first five books, the Law, and about five or more other manuscript rolls containing the remaining books. There were no chapters or verses in the Old Testament as in our English Bible to-day, but there were probably sections, since a certain portion of the book of Exodus is referred to as "the Bush" in Mark 12:26, and a portion of the book of Kings is spoken of as the "Elijah" section in Rom. 11:2. Chapter divisions were first made in the thirteenth century A.D., though paragraph and section divisions existed before that time.

The English Bible. The English Bible is a translation, the Old Testament from Hebrew (a very small part — certain chapters in Ezra and Daniel — from Aramaic, a language much like the Hebrew) and the New Testament from Greek. There is a constant need for new translations for, as time goes by, words and phrases become obsolete or change their meaning, older manuscripts are discovered which may be more true to the original, and there is a better knowledge of the ancient languages themselves. The King James Version of the Bible finished in A.D. 1611 is the best-known English translation. The chronology printed in reference editions of this version to-day is no part of the original, but was the chronology worked out by Archbishop Ussher, which first appeared in Bishop Lloyd's Bible in A.D. 1701. To-day the use of the Standard American Edition of the Revised Version of the Bible is rapidly increasing. It was published in A.D. 1900-1901 by Protestant scholars and is the most accurate English Bible we have at present.

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The Original Manuscripts. The original manuscripts of the Old Testament have all been lost. They were copied and recopied time and again. With the exception of a fragment of papyrus of the second century A.D., the oldest of the Hebrew manuscripts in existence to-day go back as far as the ninth century A.D. The earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint Version (the Old Testament in Greek) are of the fourth and fifth century A.D.

The present Hebrew text was fixed as early as the second century A.D., the date of the archetype or parent manuscript, now lost, from which all of our existing copies descended. At that time some Hebrew manuscript was adopted and officially recognized as the standard text and other manuscripts were destroyed. All the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament now extant represent the Masoretic text, that is, a text provided with a complete system of vowel points and accents by Jewish scholars between the sixth and eighth centuries A.D. When the Old Testament was written only the consonants of words were used. Since Hebrew is written from right to left, the beginning of a roll is at the right end and the end of the roll is at the left end. So in the printed Hebrew Bible of to-day the pages run from right to left.

The authors of the Old Testament used for writing material prepared animal skins or papyrus, (paper made from the inner lining of the papyrus reed), and either wrote themselves or dictated to professional writers. Thus Jeremiah the prophet, after twenty-three years of prophetic activity, in the seventh cen-

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ture B.C. dictated his addresses to Baruch his secretary, Jer., ch. 36.

Comparison of Old and New Testaments. Old Testament history from Moses, thirteenth century B.C., to Nehemiah, fifth century B.C., covers a period of eight centuries. New Testament history from the birth of Jesus, 5 or 4 B.C., to the death of Paul at Rome, about A.D. 67, covers a period of seventy-one years. The Old Testament, the work for the most part of prophets and priests, or of those with prophetic or priestly ideals, and of "wise men," took more than a thousand years to write. The earliest part was written in the thirteenth century B.C. and the latest part in the second century B.C. We know the names of more than twenty authors of the Old Testament and of eight authors of the New Testament. The New Testament was written within about fifty years, Paul's letters to the church at Thessalonica, I and II Thessalonians, being the first books written. Excepting Luke, the Greek physician, all authors of the books of the Bible, as far as we know, were Jews.

CLASSIFICATION OF OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE (THIRTY-NINE BOOKS)

A. Historical Books (Seventeen).

1. The Pentateuch — the first five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy contain law and history. Leviticus is entirely legal in nature.
2. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, I and II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther — twelve books.

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B. Poetical Books (Five).

Job (the dialogue is poetical, not the introduction or conclusion of the book), Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (only in part poetical), and Song of Solomon, (Song of Songs, Canticles). Of these Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes belong to the Wisdom Literature. Lamentations in the third division, prophetic, is also poetical.

C. Prophetic Books (Seventeen).

1. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel — five books.
2. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi — twelve books. The Minor Prophets are the twelve books after Daniel, called "Minor" because of their brevity in comparison with the larger books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Many of the prophecies are in poetical form.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was the threefold division of books in the Hebrew Old Testament?
2. What are some lost sources referred to in the Old Testament?
3. What is the origin of the order of books in the English Old Testament?
4. Where do we get the names "Old Testament" and "Bible"?
5. What was the form of the Old Testament in the time of Christ?
6. Why is there need of new translations of the Bible?
7. Tell something about the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament.
8. Compare the Old Testament and the New Testament as to the time it took to write each, and the length of history covered by each.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Old Testament canon means the collection of books in the Old Testament recognized as providing a rule and standard

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of faith and life and set apart as sacred. A study of the origin of the books of the Old Testament and of the growth of the Hebrew canon will be found very interesting.

2. Note the omission of the Apocryphal books from the English Old Testament. These books are: I and II Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah, Prayer of Manasses, I and II Maccabees, and some additions to the Books of Esther and Daniel. This collection of books is rejected by Protestants as uncanonical. No quotations from these books are found in the New Testament, and these books were not part of the Palestinian Hebrew canon and were not included by the Jews among their Scriptures.

3. Make a study of the form of books and of the materials for writing used in Old Testament times, and of the preservation of the manuscripts of the Old Testament.

4. Make a comparison of the form of the King James Version and the Standard American Edition of the Revised Version. Note especially that Hebrew poetry in the Old Testament is printed as such in English in the Revised Version. Examples of words that have changed their meaning since A.D. 1611: tell — number; hale — drag; fray — frighten; cunning — skill; clouted — patched; sod — boiled; let — hinder. Examples of words that are obsolete: leasing — falsehood; daysman — umpire; sith — since; minish — diminish; straitness — distress; chapmen — traders; wot — know; poll thee — cut off thy hair. Make a list of other words, and note also that in the plays of Shakespeare (died A.D. 1616) there are words that are no longer used to-day and words that have altered meanings.

5. A study of the making of the English Bible, especially of the work of John Wycliffe and William Tyndale, of the issue of the King James Version, A.D. 1611, of the Anglo-American Revision of 1881-1885, and of the Standard American Edition of the Revised Version of 1900-1901 will be found very valuable.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS LITERATURE

Ranking with the other great literatures of the world is the Hebrew literature found in the Old Testament. Its beauty of form is no less wonderful than its religious truth.

In it we find exquisite love stories. There is the story of Abraham sending his chief servant from Palestine to Mesopotamia to get a wife for his son Isaac. The servant gives silver and gold and raiment to Rebekah, and to her brother and mother the "purchase money" or "bride price." Rebekah accompanies the servant to Palestine and becomes Isaac's wife. "He loved her," and "was comforted after his mother's death." Jacob serves seven years for his wife Rachel, and the time "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." The story of Ruth the Moabitess, who leaves her land to follow her mother-in-law, Naomi, back to Bethlehem in Judah, is, in the words of Dr. J. E. McFadyen, "a wonderful prose poem, sweet, artless, and persuasive — fresh with the scent of the harvest fields. The love — stronger than country — of Ruth for Naomi, the gracious figure of Boaz as he moves about the fields with a word of blessing for the reapers, the innocent scheming of Naomi to secure him as a husband for Ruth — these and a score of similar touches establish the book forever in the heart of all who love nobility and romance." Ruth is loyal to Naomi, and

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says, "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." "The story of Ruth is the seldom-told story of the love and loyalty of two women. That it should have found a place in the Bible is very impressive when we consider how small account would be made of the friendship of women among any Eastern people except Israel, at any period of time; and it is still more impressive because the relationship between these women — that of mother-in-law and daughter-in-law — here so dignified and pathetic and mutually protective, is the relationship that at all times and in all countries has been held up for derision, suspicion, or scorn." ¹

There is also humor, sarcasm, and irony in the literature of the Old Testament. At Mount Carmel Elijah taunts the followers of Baal who have been praying all morning to their god: "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." Job says to his three friends who are "miserable comforters" and "physicians of no value":

"No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
But I have understanding as well as you."

Irony is present both in Jotham's fable, Judg. 9:8-15, which shows what a worthless fellow his brother is, and in the fable of the thistle and cedar, which is sent by the king of the Northern Kingdom to the king of

¹ Louise S. Houghton, "Hebrew Life and Thought," page 156.

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Judah, II Kings 14:9, 10. In The Proverbs there are many pithy sayings:

"It is bad, it is bad, saith the buyer;
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth."

"It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,
Than with a contentious woman in a wide house."

"As the door turneth upon its hinges,
So doth the sluggard upon his bed.
The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish;
It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.
The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit
Than seven men that can render a reason."

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as a robber,
And thy want as an armed man."

The Old Testament contains many wonderful stories. Think of the majestic story of the Creation: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . . And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." How dramatic are the stories of Joseph and his brethren, of Queen Esther, of Jephthah's vow and the sacrifice of the daughter whom he loved, of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Assyrian army by pestilence! How beautiful is the story of David and the well of Bethlehem, II Sam. 23:13-17! The Philistines are in that city and David near by longs for a drink from the well of Bethlehem with which he has been so familiar from his boyhood days. Three of the heroes, loyal to David, break through the Philistine host and bring him some water,

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but he will not drink it. The men have risked their lives to get it and so he pours out the precious liquid to Jehovah as an offering.

There is also much wonderful poetry. Poems are found in many of the Old Testament books, and the books of Job (except the beginning and the end), Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Lamentations are entirely poetical. One of the great poems is Deborah's Song, Judg., ch. 5. In this battle ode there is a detailed description of the muster of the Hebrew tribes, six uniting against their enemies, the Canaanites:

“For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
For that the people offered themselves willingly,
Bless ye Jehovah.”

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, Dan, Asher failed to come, and are reproached for their absence from the battle, but

“Zebulun was a people that jeopardded their lives unto the death,
And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field.”

The Canaanite kings fought, but made no gain of money.

“From heaven fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera.”

Jael has slain Sisera, but his mother does not know of it.

“Through the window she looked forth, and cried,
The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

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Her wise ladies answered her,
Yea, she returned answer to herself,
Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil? "

She does not wait for an answer for she thinks that the dividing of the booty is the cause of delay. The poem ends:

"So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah:
But let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth
in his might."

A. R. Gordon calls Judg., ch. 5 "the triumphal hymn of Deborah, a song that for force and fire is worthy to be placed alongside the noblest battle odes in any language."² "The poem gives the really vital points in luminous pictures—the desperate condition of Israel, the one cry that could unite the tribes in uttermost endeavor, the part played in the battle by the forces of nature, the wretched death of Sisera, in contrast to the expected victory and booty. These are the elements of universal human interest."³

David, in that exquisite poem, the lament over Saul, his enemy in the past, and over Jonathan, his friend, II Sam., ch. 1, speaks of the great loss Israel has suffered in the death of these two men:

"Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon thy high places!
How are the mighty fallen! "

He tells of his personal grief in the loss of the one he loved so much:

² A. R. Gordon, "The Poets of the Old Testament," page 31.

³ H. T. Fowler, "The Literature of Ancient Israel from the Earliest Times to 135 B.C.," page 20.

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"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women."

This beautiful elegy or dirge, says Dr. George Adam Smith, "is by a man upon his dead enemy and his dead friend. But for the former there is no word save of generosity and admiration. Saul had relentlessly hunted David, and upon more than one occasion had attempted his life. . . . David spared his hunter's life and showed kindness to his children."

The Old Testament is a library of poetry and prose. It contains love stories and humorous passages, narratives and addresses, songs and psalms, prophecies and proverbs, history and law. It is far more than literature, but it contains literary treasures that will never perish. "The phrases from the Bible which have grown into our everyday speech spring impartially from the Old and New Testaments: we use 'the son of his old age,' or 'the valley of the shadow of death,' or 'the pure in heart,' or 'lilies of the field,' without thinking whether they come from one part of the book or the other. This unity of style is, as we shall see, largely due to the fact that the whole book was translated at the same period into a language of unsurpassed and unfaded vigor, which now has enough tinge of the archaic to give it a color of its own. It was Tyndale's great achievement that once for all he fixed the language of the whole Bible: and under the anxious and inspired care of the revisers who followed in his steps the style has been brought to a point of simplicity and dignity, of strong feeling expressed by the rich music

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of the prose, of stateliness and directness, which sets it apart from the style of any other book in the language." ⁴

Hebrew Poetry. The chief characteristic of the form of Hebrew poetry is parallelism of members or clauses of approximately the same length. Four varieties of parallelism may be distinguished:

1. **Synonymous parallelism.** The second line repeats the thought of the first.

"How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied?" Num. 23:8.

2. **Antithetic parallelism.** The second line is a contrast to the first line.

"A wise son maketh a glad father;
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." Prov. 10:1.

3. **Synthetic parallelism.** The thought of the first line is completed by the second line.

"Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is,
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Prov. 15:17.

4. **Climactic parallelism.** The second line takes up words from the first line and completes it.

"Ascribe unto Jehovah, O ye sons of the mighty,
Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength." Ps. 29:1.

By recognizing the principle of parallelism in structure and thought in Hebrew poetry, the meaning of the Biblical passage will be determined more accurately.

⁴ J. H. Gardiner, "The Bible as English Literature," page 4.

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For example, in Gen. 4:23, one man was slain, not two. In Ps. 8:4, "man" and "son of man" are identical, and in Ps. 72:1 "the king" is also "the king's son."

Hebrew poetry is almost exclusively lyric and gnomic. In Hebrew literature there is no epic and there is no drama in any real sense. Most of the Hebrew poetry preserved in the Old Testament is of a religious character, though there are a few secular poems, as Lamech's sword song, Gen. 4:23, 24; the song of the well, Num. 21:17, 18; and David's elegies, II Sam. 1:19-27; 3:33, 34. In Hebrew poetry there was always rhythm, but there was no meter in the strict sense of the term, and rime was accidental. The most essential and distinctive characteristic of the narratives of the Bible is "the transfiguring of a limpid and simple vividness by deep earnestness and elevation of feeling." In the poetry of the Bible we find "the same combination of a primitive simplicity and concreteness of expression with the profound and ennobling emotion that transfigures the experience of man into an expression of permanent verities."⁵

⁵ J. H. Gardiner, "The Bible as English Literature," page 88.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS LITERATURE

(Continued)

The Wisdom Literature. The books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes belong to the Wisdom Literature of the Hebrews, as do the books of Ecclesiasticus and The Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha. The Wisdom Literature took into consideration God, human nature, and practical morality, and the problems arising therefrom. "The wise," or the sages, formed an important class among the Hebrews. In Jer. 18:18, "the wise" are mentioned with prophets and priests. "No province of life was too lofty, none too humble, for wisdom to enter. It touches on the conduct of a king, the administration of law, the training of a family, the ordering of a household, industry, honesty, sobriety, agriculture, friendship, the problem of suffering, the question of whether life is worth while, and many other subjects. It furnishes, on the whole, cool, keen, clear-sighted criticism of life. It gives good common-sense advice. Yet, though dealing so largely with secular subjects, it is distinctly religious in spirit. It inculcates prudence, shrewdness, and industry, but always with a consciousness of the presence of God. . . . All wisdom is based on the thought of God ruling life. . . . All life is subject to the ordering of the

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Almighty.”¹ The wise life is presented “as the life grounded in the fear of God.” “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge.”

The Proverbs. The book of Proverbs, which is entirely poetical, considers the problems of practical morality. The authors of the book were “wise men,” including Solomon, king of Israel, who was the author of some of the proverbs. See I Kings 4:32; Prov. 25:1; 30:1; 31:1. “The wisdom of The Proverbs is not speculative, but practical. It is the best way of conducting one’s life. He is the wise man who keeps his life running on the lines appointed for it by the Creator. Man’s wisdom is, in fact, the counterpart of the wisdom of God. By his wisdom God has made all things, and, among the rest, he has made the world. In the framework of his creation he has sunk lines of guidance, upon which the life of man is intended to roll smoothly forward; and man’s wisdom consists in discerning these lines and guiding his course by them. He is a wise man whose life follows the course appointed for it by God.”²

“Nowhere is sound wisdom more pithily commended; and nowhere have we such powerfully drawn pictures of the ways and the end of folly. The proverbs lead us on the straight, clear path of righteousness.”³

¹ I. F. Wood and E. Grant, “The Bible as Literature,” pages 162, 177.

² James Stalker, “The Beauty of the Bible,” pages 105, 106.

³ A. R. Gordon, “The Poets of the Old Testament,” page 267.

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Ecclesiastes. The book of Ecclesiastes, in the Hebrew Bible called "Koheleth," "Preacher" or "Teacher," is for the most part in prose. The book consists of meditations on human life and society, and with its single theme resembles The Book of Job more than the book of Proverbs. The conclusion of the book is especially to be noted: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth. . . . This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:1, 13, 14.

The Book of Job. The Book of Job is one of the great masterpieces of the world. Carlyle said, "There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit." Tennyson pronounced it "the greatest poem whether of ancient or modern times." Both in thought and language the poetry of the book is wonderful. There is humor and pathos, abundant figurative language, superb description, and an extraordinary combination of beauty of form with depth of thought.

The book consists of: prologue, Job, chs. 1; 2; three cycles of speeches between Job and his friends, chs. 3-14; 15-21; 22-31; speeches of Elihu, chs. 32-37; intervention of Jehovah, chs. 38:1-42:6; epilogue, ch. 42:7-17. The theme of the book is, Why do the righteous suffer? This broadens into a discussion of the problem of suffering. The negative solution proposed is that not all suffering is caused by sin. The positive

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light thrown upon the problem is that some suffering is caused by sin, some is sent to test the disinterestedness of our religious life, some is disciplinary. A certain amount of physical suffering is inevitable in a world constituted as ours is. There is a balance in the future life, which, however, Job sees only vaguely. Suffering will always remain a partial mystery, for all our knowledge is partial. But the wisdom of God satisfies the soul. Every solution at which the human mind has ever arrived, except that of vicarious suffering, is suggested in this book. Compare Isa., ch. 53.

"Here the poetical genius of Israel reaches its noblest height. In range of imagination, and sustained splendor of diction, the book not merely stands alone in the Old Testament, but takes a foremost place also among the masterpieces of the world's literature."⁴

The Song of Solomon. The book of The Song of Solomon (Hebrew title, "The Song of Songs," equivalent to "The Finest Song," called also "Canticles") is a poem, and the subject of the poem is love. Some think that the book is an allegory, representing the love of God and Israel. Others believe that it is a drama, the subject being the love between man and woman. Still others think that it is a collection of Hebrew love or wedding songs used at marriage festivals. Compare Psalm 45, a song celebrating the king's marriage. The verses in praise of love, S. of Sol. 8: 6, 7, exalt the divine ideal of monogamy — the love of one man for

⁴ A. R. Gordon, "The Poets of the Old Testament," page 202.

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one woman; "the love here celebrated is not only pure but exclusive." "For love is strong as death."

"Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
He would utterly be condemned."

The Lamentations of Jeremiah. The book of Lamentations consists of five independent poems, chs. 1; 2; 3; 4; and 5, in four of which, chs. 1; 2; 3; and 4, the verses are arranged alphabetically, following the order of the Hebrew alphabet with its twenty-two letters. The first four poems are in the elegiac measure, in which the second line is shorter than the first.⁵

"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
She is become as a widow, that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces is become tributary!" Lam. 1:1.

The theme of the book is the grief of the faithful because of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

The Psalms. The Psalms is the most wonderful collection of religious lyrics we possess. The psalms express the religious life of the Hebrew people, their deep spiritual feelings and aspirations, their joys and sorrows, their convictions, their experiences, their hopes and fears, their supreme desires. The book "contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of his Maker. In it are gathered the lyrical burst of

⁵ For an example of the rhythm, see S. R. Driver, "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," page 457.

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his tenderness, the moan of his penitence, the pathos of his sorrow, the triumph of his victory, the despair of his defeat, the firmness of his confidence, the rapture of his assured hope. . . . In The Psalms is painted, for all time, in fresh unfading colors, the picture of the moral warfare of man, often baffled yet never wholly defeated, struggling upwards to all that is best and highest in his nature, always aware how short of the aim falls the attempt, how great is the gulf that severs the wish from its fulfillment. . . . The psalms, then, are a mirror in which each man sees the motions of his own soul. They express in exquisite words the kinship which every thoughtful human heart craves to find with a supreme, unchanging, loving God, who will be to him a Protector, Guardian, and Friend.”⁶ “It was ‘out of the depths’ that the psalmists cried to God, and the deep of our experience answers to the deep of theirs. In their words we find our own emotions expressed and see our own experiences reflected. They knew what was in man; and that is why they ‘find’ us. They knew the strangeness and the sorrow of life, but amidst it all they also knew God to be their shelter and their strength.”⁷

The message of The Psalms is of the one God, Jehovah, who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, whose glory and majesty is revealed in nature. He is a holy and righteous God and he demands holiness and righteousness of men. But he is also a God of mercy and loving-kindness who forgives sinners, and who cares for the afflicted. The sense of the reality of this

⁶ R. E. Prothero, “The Psalms in Human Life,” pages 1, 2.

⁷ J. E. McFadyen, “The Messages of the Psalmists,” page 4.

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personal God is expressed throughout the Psalter. "The center of the psalmists' universe is God, the shining point round which all their faith and hope revolve, the living Source of their light and strength and joy."⁸ "The great prophetic doctrine of the intrinsic worthlessness of sacrifice apart from the disposition of the worshiper is emphatically laid down. It is not sacrifice but obedience that God desires; it is not thank offering but a thankful heart which finds acceptance with him; it is not sacrifice but contrition which is the condition of forgiveness. Penitence and prayer are true sacrifices: and the moral conditions which can alone make sacrifice acceptable and are requisite for approach to God are constantly insisted upon."⁹

The Psalter received its present form in postexilic times. Some of the earlier psalms had been edited and modified to adapt them to new situations and needs, just as the hymns in our present-day collections are often changed in order to make them more helpful in the services of the Church. Back of the present collection of psalms in the Psalter were smaller hymn books made up originally of individual psalms, and compiled at various times in the course of the centuries.

The Psalms played a large part in the religious life of the Hebrews not only as a product of deep religious experience but also as a contribution to the development of spiritual religion. Both in public worship in the Temple and in private worship and devotion in and

⁸ A. R. Gordon, "The Poets of the Old Testament," page 120.

⁹ A. F. Kirkpatrick, "The Psalms," Introduction, pages lxxxvi, lxxxvii.

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outside the Temple the psalms were of supreme value to the Hebrews in the expression of religion.

Taking their origin from a wide range of religious experience, the psalms were much used in the Jewish Church, and the Psalter is found very helpful to-day by the Christian Church. Luther called The Psalms "a Bible in miniature." The Psalter is "the Church's manual of prayer and praise in its public worship, the treasury of devotion for its individual members in their private communing with God."¹⁰

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

(Chapters II and III)

1. What are some of the love stories in the Old Testament?
2. What examples of humor, sarcasm, or irony do you find?
3. What are some of the most beautiful prose stories in the Old Testament?
4. What kinds of parallelism are found in Hebrew poetry? What are two forms of poetry not found in the Old Testament?
5. What is meant by Wisdom Literature? What subjects are discussed by the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes?
6. What are the themes of The Song of Solomon and The Lamentations of Jeremiah?
7. Why does The Psalms mean so much to the devotional life of the Christian? What psalms do you find most helpful? Why? What psalms are the best known to-day?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. The American Revised Version, unlike the Version of 1611 (King James), generally prints poetry as poetry and prose as prose, so that one can easily find the different types of literature. Besides The Book of Job (except the prologue, Job, chs.

¹⁰ A. F. Kirkpatrick, "The Psalms," Introduction, page xcviii.

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1; 2, and the epilogue, Job 42:7-17), The Psalms, The Proverbs, The Song of Solomon, and The Lamentations of Jeremiah, the following poems should be noticed: Gen. 4:23, 24; 9:25-27; 25:23; 27:27-29, 39, 40; 49:2-27; Ex. 15:1-18, 21; Num. 6:24-26; 21:14, 15, 17, 18, 27-30; 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-24; Deut. 32:1-43; 33:2-29; Josh. 10:12, 13; Judg. 5:2-31; 14:14, 18; 15:16; I Sam. 2:1-10; 18:7; 29:5; II Sam. 1:19-27; 3: 33, 34; 22:2-51; 23:1-7; Isa. 38:10-20; Jonah 2:2-9; Hab. 3:2-19. Much of the prophetic writings is poetic in form, but not printed as such in the American Revised Version.

2. Make a study of The Book of Job, determining the position of Job and his three friends, of Elihu, and of Jehovah.

3. The Psalter is divided into five books, probably in imitation of the Pentateuch: Psalms 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150. Each book ends with a doxology, Ps. 41:13; 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; and Psalm 150. The natural division is into three parts: Psalms 1-41; 42-89; 90-150. "Speaking broadly and generally, the psalms of the first division, Psalms 1-41, are personal; those of the second, Psalms 42-89, national; those of the third, Psalms 90-150, liturgical. . . . It is in the first division that personal prayers and thanksgivings are chiefly to be found; in the second, prayers in special times of national calamity, and thanksgivings in times of national deliverance; in the third, psalms of praise and thanksgiving for general use in the Temple services.¹¹ Psalms 9 and 10 were originally one poem, and likewise Psalms 42 and 43. Some psalms appear twice, for instance, Psalm 53 parallels Psalm 14; Psalm 70 parallels Ps. 40:13-17; Psalm 108 parallels Ps. 57:7-11 plus Ps. 60:5-12. Some of the psalms are acrostic or alphabetic in the Hebrew: Psalms 9; 10; 25; 34; 37; 111; 112; 119 (eight verses to a letter of the Hebrew alphabet with its twenty-two letters); 145. Compare Lam., chs. 1; 2; 3; 4; Prov. 31:10-31; Nahum 1:2-2:2, all of which are alphabetic in the Hebrew. Discuss the authorship of The Psalms with a consideration of the titles. Seventy-three psalms are ascribed to David in their titles. Others are ascribed to various authors, and fifty psalms are anonymous. We know that David was a musician and poet from I Sam. 16:17, 18; 18:10; II Sam. 1:17, 18; 3:33, 34; 6:5; Amos 6:5. He was "the sweet psalmist of Israel." II Sam. 23:1.

¹¹ Quotation from A. F. Kirkpatrick, in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. IV, article, "Psalms."

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4. Note the refrains which appear in some of the psalms: Ps. 39:5, 11; 42:5, 11; 43:5; 46:7, 11; 49:12, 20; 56:4, 10, 11; 57:5, 11; 59:6, 14 and 9, 17; 62:1, 2, 5, 6; 67:3, 5; 80:3, 7, 19; 87:4, 6; 99:5, 9; 107:6, 13, 19, 28 and 8, 15, 21, 31; 116:13, 14, 17, 18; 136:1, 2 (26 times. "For his lovingkindness endureth for ever"); 144:7, 8, 11. See also Isa. 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4.¹²

5. Dr. J. E. McFadyen, in "The Messages of the Psalmists," divides the psalms into ten classes: psalms of adoration; of reflection; of thanksgiving; in celebration of worship; historical; imprecatory; penitential; petitionary; royal psalms; psalms concerning the universal reign of Jehovah.

¹² See S. R. Driver, "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," page 366.

CHAPTER IV

PALESTINE OR THE HOLY LAND

The Old Testament World. The Old Testament or Hebrew world was enclosed by the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. It included Asia west of the Persian Gulf and south of the mountains of Armenia, and Egypt on the continent of Africa. Trading nations gave the people knowledge of such far-away places as Tarshish in Spain and Ophir, believed to have been in Africa, Arabia, or India.

The Central Location of Palestine. Palestine's location at the eastern end of the Mediterranean was central among the nations. To the southwest was Egypt; to the west were the Philistines; to the northwest was Phoenicia; and to the north and east were the countries Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia. Moreover, Palestine lay on one of the main routes of travel of the ancient world. It was a "bridge" between Africa and Asia, with the desert on one side and the Mediterranean on the other, a road between Egypt of the Nile valley and Babylonia of the Euphrates and Tigris valleys. This gave Palestine a strategic position. Caravans of camels and traders, and armies of marching soldiers were compelled to go through Palestine in passing between Egypt and Babylonia, for the Arabian desert separated these two great lands of an-

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tiquity. Hence Palestine was an international highway, the control of which was eagerly desired by the surrounding nations. This fact explains the repetition in the Old Testament of the story of alliances of the Hebrews with other nations for defensive or offensive purposes, of attacks upon the Hebrew kingdoms, of vassalage, of the payment of tribute, and of subjection. It also makes clear the reason for the control of Palestine by various world powers at different times: Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Babylonian of Nebuchadrezzar's time, Persian, Greek, Roman, Moslem Arab, Moslem Turk, and finally, since the World War, British.

However, in spite of its central geographical position, Palestine was also, in a sense, isolated, for it was separated from other lands — on the west by the Mediterranean, on the south and east by the desert, and on the north by a mountain range. It was at the same time "both near to, and aloof from, the main streams of human life." By this partial seclusion God enabled the Hebrew nation, especially the Kingdom of Judah, to maintain its life, and eventually to make its gift of a universal religion to the nations of the world by the coming of the Son of David and Son of God, Christ Jesus.

Name, Area, Views. Palestine (Greek, "*Palais-tine*" from "*Philistia*") received its name from the Philistines, enemies of the Israelites in the time of Samson, Saul, and David. The land was known to the Hebrews as the "land of Canaan" and the inhabitants as "the Canaanites." It is "Holy Land," cf.

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Zech. 2:12, to the Christian because of its history and more especially because it is the land of Christ Jesus who gave to us our Christian religion.

Palestine is a little land of only ten thousand square miles, about the size of the State of Vermont. Twenty-six Palestines could be placed in Texas. The area west of the Jordan River is about six thousand square miles; east of the Jordan about four thousand square miles. The length of Palestine from Dan in the north to Beer-sheba in the south, is one hundred and fifty miles. The breadth of Palestine from the coast to the Jordan varies from twenty-five miles in the north to fifty-five miles in the south. The average breadth west of the river is forty miles. Bethlehem is only five miles south of Jerusalem; Hebron is twenty miles south; Beer-sheba is fifty miles south; and Shechem is thirty miles north. How short the distances are! Beth-el, one of the two royal sanctuaries in the Northern Kingdom, established by Jeroboam I, was only ten miles from Jerusalem where Solomon's Temple stood. Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom from Omri's time until 722 B.C., was only thirty-five miles from Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom. Americans who think in terms of large distances and areas will understand the Old Testament story better when they hold clearly in mind the size of the Holy Land. However, one must remember that the size of a country does not determine its importance. Palestine is a great land because of its supreme contribution to our civilization.

Three fourths of the Holy Land can be seen from Mount Ebal, a mountain three thousand feet high,

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thirty miles north of Jerusalem. One can see the Mediterranean Sea on the west, less than thirty miles away; beyond the Jordan on the east; snow-crowned Mount Hermon seventy-five miles away on the north-east; and on the south, a point only five miles north of Jerusalem.¹ From the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, one can see the Dead Sea, four thousand feet below and fifteen miles away. Ruth in the fields of Boaz at Bethlehem could see her own land of Moab, east of the Jordan. Christ from a hill northwest of Nazareth could see thirty miles in each of three directions.

The Lake of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea. The Sea or Lake of Galilee is about thirteen miles long and its greatest width is about eight miles. It is a fresh-water lake, nearly seven hundred feet below sea level. Lake Huleh ("the waters of Merom," Josh. 11:5, 7) north of the Lake of Galilee, is seven feet above sea level.

The Jordan River is formed by the melting snow on Mount Hermon, which is 9166 feet above sea level. It flows through Lake Huleh and drops 689 feet between Lake Huleh and the Lake of Galilee which it enters. From the Lake of Galilee south to the Dead Sea the distance is only about sixty-five miles in a straight line, though the Jordan winds for nearly two hundred miles between those two points. The river has a rapid current, and this has given it its name: Jordan means "River that Goes Down," or "Descender." In its course from the Lake of Galilee, 682 feet below sea

¹ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Chapter VI.

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level, to the Dead Sea, 1292 feet below sea level, this swiftly flowing stream falls over six hundred feet, an average of nearly ten feet a mile. There were no bridges across the Jordan in Bible times, and people crossed it at the fords where the water was shallower than at other parts of the stream. These crossing places were more numerous north of the Jabbok River, which flows into the Jordan from the east, about half-way between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea.

The Jordan itself for most of the year is from ninety to one hundred feet wide, with a depth varying from three to ten or twelve feet. In the rainy season it is wider and deeper. The valley of the Jordan below the Lake of Galilee is about three miles wide at the north and fourteen miles wide near Jericho. "The pride of the Jordan," Jer. 12:5, was the rank jungle along its banks, a home for lions in Old Testament times, Jer. 49:19. The Jordan, as G. A. Smith points out,² was a border and a barrier, separating the land west of the river from the land east of it. In nearly all the references in which the name occurs, it is governed by a preposition — unto, over, across.

The Dead Sea (Salt Sea) is about ten by fifty miles in area, and its water contains more than four times as much salt as ocean water, so that no fish can live in it. There is no outlet, and the water flowing in evaporates — more than six million tons of water, it is estimated, rise in vapor each day — such great evaporation being due to the excessive heat of this region so far below the level of the ocean. The shore of the Dead

² "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pages 490, 491.

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Sea, a quarter of a mile below ocean level, is the lowest spot uncovered by water on the surface of the earth. The water of the Dead Sea at the northeast corner is thirteen hundred feet deep, but it is shallow at the south end, being only from eight to fourteen feet deep. "No other part of our earth, uncovered by water, sinks to three hundred feet below the level of the ocean. But here we have a rift more than one hundred and sixty miles long (from just below Lake Huleh, where the dip below sea level begins, to the point on the Arabah south of the Dead Sea, where the valley rises again to sea level) and from two to fifteen broad. . . . Is it not true that on the earth there is nothing else like this deep, this colossal ditch?"³

The Zones or Sections of Palestine. Between the Mediterranean Sea and the desert, Palestine is divided into four zones or sections, the dividing lines running parallel north and south. Beginning in the west they are: (1) the maritime or coast plain, on the level of the Mediterranean, varying in breadth from five to twenty-five miles; (2) the central range or hill country, "western highlands"; (3) the deep depression of the Jordan Valley, below sea level; and (4) the range of hills east of the Jordan, "eastern highlands." At the north the central range is broken in two by the triangular plain of Esdraelon which connects the maritime plain with the valley of the Jordan, just south of the Lake of Galilee. In the north the central range falls immediately to the maritime plain, but in Judea a smaller range, the hills of the Shephelah ("the low-

³ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pages 468, 469.

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land"), comes between the maritime plain and the central range. In The Negeb ("the South," cf. Gen. 12:9, meaning "the dry land."), beginning south of Hebron, and extending south of Beer-sheba, the central range descends in a series of terraces into the desert.

"All the central range, and the center of the eastern range was mountain, fit for infantry only. The maritime plain, Esdraelon, and the Jordan Valley, along with the great plateaus of the eastern range, Hauran and Moab, were plains, bearing the great trunk roads, and feasible for cavalry and chariots. Now, it is of the greatest importance to observe that all the mountain land, viz., the central range and Gilead, represents Israel's proper and longest possessions, first won and last lost — while all the valley land and the tableland was, for the most part, hardly won and scarcely kept by Israel; but at first remained for long in Canaanite keeping, and towards the end was the earliest to come under the great invading empires." ⁴

The Coast Plain and the Plain of Esdraelon. The maritime or coast plain was the path of the armies which at various times have passed through Palestine. It has been a famous warpath from the earliest historical times to the days of the Great War. The northern part of the plain, the plain of Sharon, extends from Carmel south to Joppa, a distance of about fifty miles. The Philistine plain extended about fifty miles south of Joppa. Here were the ancient Philistine cities,

⁴ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," page 54.

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Ekron, Gath, Ashdod, Ashkelon, which was on the sea, and Gaza. From these chief cities the Philistines marched their armies against the Israelites, in the time of the Judges and of Saul and David. The pass of Dothan, mentioned in the Joseph story, Gen. 37:17, 25, formed an easy course from the plain of Sharon to the plain of Esdraelon, and from there across the Jordan at Bethshean, south of the Lake of Galilee, making a convenient route to Gilead, east of the Jordan, and to the capital of Syria, Damascus.

There was no good harbor along the coast of Palestine; the sea was therefore "a barrier, and not a highway." There is no word for "port" in the Old Testament. In this "we have the crowning proof of the peculiar security and seclusion of their land as far as the sea is concerned."

The plain of Esdraelon runs southeast from Haifa on the Mediterranean. Through the plain the Kishon River takes a northwesterly direction. The plain was the scene of many battles and has been aptly called the "classic battle ground of Scripture." Here Sisera and the Canaanites fought against the Israelites under Deborah and Barak; here Gideon and his army of three hundred met the Midianites; on this plain Saul and his army went down to defeat at the hands of the Philistines; and here also Josiah, king of Judah, met his death at the hands of Pharaoh-necho of Egypt. The entrances to the plain are five, three at the corners of the triangle and the other two at Megiddo and Jezreel.

The Central Range. The central range or hill country is the "backbone" of Palestine west of the

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Jordan. It is spoken of in three divisions as, "the hill-country of Naphtali," "the hill-country of Ephraim," and "the hill-country of Judah." Josh. 20:7. The height above sea level of some of the mountains and cities in the hill country may be given at this point in order to emphasize the elevation of this part of Palestine. Mount Carmel at the western end of the plain of Esdraelon is 1810 feet above sea level; Mount Tabor, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, 1843 feet; Samaria, five miles northwest of Shechem, 1454 feet; Shechem, 1880 feet; and Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, near Shechem thirty miles north of Jerusalem, are respectively 3077 and 2849 feet above sea level. Jerusalem is half a mile (about 2500 feet), and Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, 3040 feet above the ocean.

Rivers East of the Jordan. East of the Jordan River there are three rivers: the Yarmuk, entering the Jordan just south of the Lake of Galilee; the Jabbok, about halfway between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea; and the Arnon, emptying into the Dead Sea on its eastern side, about halfway between the north and south end of the lake. Generally speaking the Ammonites were settled between the Jabbok and the Arnon, and the Moabites south of the Arnon, while the Edomites were farther south, at the south end of the Dead Sea.

CHAPTER V

PALESTINE OR THE HOLY LAND

(Continued)

Climate. The Bible speaks of "seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter." Gen. 8:22. There are but two seasons in Palestine: summer, beginning in May with five rainless months, a dry, hot period with a cloudless sky; and winter, or the rainy season, which begins in October. Winter is not a season of continuous rain. The weather is comparatively warm, and there are more days of sunshine than of rain during the seven winter months. The climate, therefore, makes the Holy Land a land of outdoor life. The prophets spoke outdoors, in the Temple courts or at the city gates. Christ generally addressed his audiences in the open air, from the hillside or lakeside or plain, even from a little boat near the shore of the Lake of Galilee. The climate made it possible for hundreds of thousands of Jews to assemble at Jerusalem at the times of the great festivals, and for the multitudes that followed Jesus to be away from their homes for several days at a time.

Although it is a small country, Palestine displays remarkable differences in temperature and has a great variety of food products, due to the exposure of the land on the west to the sea and on the east to the desert, and also to the unusual variation in altitude,

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from thirteen hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean on the shore of the Dead Sea, to the summit of Mount Hermon in the north, over nine thousand feet above sea level. On the same day in summer the thermometer may be 120° F. at the Dead Sea, and there may be snow on Mount Hermon. No other country the size of Palestine has such variety of animal and vegetable life, scenery, climate, and soil. "In Palestine there is every climate between the subtropical of one end of the Jordan Valley and the subalpine above the other end." The feat of one of David's mighty men who went down and slew a lion "in time of snow," II Sam. 23:20, is used by Dr. G. A. Smith as an illustration of the great variation of climate in Palestine. He points out that the lion had strayed up the Judean hills from the Jordan Valley and had been caught in a sudden snowstorm. "Where else than in Palestine could lions and snow thus come together?"¹

Palestine as a whole has a temperate climate, since most of the land is from one thousand to two thousand feet above the ocean. The mean annual temperature varies from 62° to 68°. February is the coldest month, with an average temperature of about 46° F.; March and April average 54° to 61°; May and June, 65° to 74°; July and August, 76°; September and October, 75° to 68°; November, about 60°; December, 52°; January, 49°.²

Rains and Winds. The early rain or "former rain," Deut. 11:14, falls during October and November

¹ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," page 65. See also page 56.

² *Ibid.*, page 71.

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and softens the hard, dry soil, making possible plowing and the sowing of grain. "The latter rain" comes at the close of winter, bringing heavy showers in March and April. In ordinary years the rainfall is from twenty-five to thirty inches. December, January, and February are the months of the most rain. Since crops depended on rainfall, there was famine in times of drought, II Sam. 21:1; I Kings 17:1-4; Hag. 1:10, 11. Barley ripens in April or May, and wheat in May or June, depending on the elevation or depression of the land.

The prevailing winds are from the west. The winds from the west and southwest bring the winter rain, I Kings 18:44; Luke 12:54. In summer the northwest wind blows over Palestine and, although it does not bring rain, it tempers the heat. The winds blowing from the desert, the east and southeast winds, are hot, bringing dust and sand, and are often destructive to animal and vegetable life. Jer. 4:11; Luke 12:55.

Food. The chief article of food in Bible times was bread made of wheat or barley. The loaf was round, the size of a plate, and about an inch thick. It was never cut with a knife as bread is cut to-day, but was torn or broken by hand. So the Master "took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples." It was common to eat with the fingers, and instead of a spoon a piece of bread was used as a scoop to dip into the dish. Other foods were milk; curdled milk; butter; cheese; olives, green or ripe, and olive oil; figs; dates; pomegranates; grapes, eaten ripe or dried in the sun into raisins; honey from wild bees; and vegetables —

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beans, lentils, melons, cucumbers, onions, and others. As was only natural in a climate like that of Palestine, where ice was not used to keep food cool, butter was generally a liquid, stored in jars, Job 20:17.

Meat, the flesh of cattle, sheep, or goats, was seldom eaten in the ordinary home except on special occasions, such as that of a religious festival or the visit of some friend. Fish from the Lake of Galilee, the Jordan River, or the Mediterranean Sea, was either eaten in a fresh state or salted and preserved until wanted. The father of the prodigal son had the "fatted calf" killed for the feast in honor of the returned child. Abraham, Gen. 18:1-8, provided his three visitors with butter (probably curdled milk, or *leben*, as it is called to-day in Syria and Arabia), sweet milk, and "a calf tender and good," with abundance of cakes, and, though he spoke modestly of the meal as a "morsel of bread," it was a hearty repast. The traveler on a journey or pilgrimage took in his wallet or leather bag for holding provisions such food as bread, Josh. 9:12, olives, dried fish, grapes, and figs. We can think of the Apostle Paul on his journeys in the Mediterranean world carrying such simple but sufficient fare.

Manners and Customs in Palestine. How much light the language and customs of modern Palestine throw upon the pages of the Bible! Life in the Holy Land to-day is practically the same as it was in Abraham's time, four thousand years ago, and a knowledge of Palestine and of its manners and customs makes more clear and real to us the Bible message. The Bible is a universal book with a religion for all people; but

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it comes from Palestine, an Oriental country, and its message is expressed in an Eastern manner. So many of the so-called difficulties of the Bible vanish as one understands the life of the Near East.

One who has heard the "Take it for nothing" from the shopkeepers in the bazaars of the Orient will understand the Oriental courtesy of Ephron the Hittite when he offered to Abraham the field and cave at Hebron, Gen. 23:11. Ephron expected to receive money from Abraham and Abraham intended to give it. If Jesus were to speak at the present time in Palestine, his language would take practically the same form that it takes in our Gospels. A disciple said to Christ, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." When a missionary in Syria urged one of his students to complete his education by traveling in Europe, he replied, "I must first of all bury my father." When questioned he explained that, while his father was in excellent health, domestic duties had a first claim, and that he wished to be with his father during the old man's last years. The words of Christ to the Seventy, "Salute no man on the way," are best understood through the customs of salutation in the East. The gospel messengers might be delayed on this special mission if they took time for the elaborate formalities of the roadside.

A Comparison of Samaria with Judea. Samaria, north of Judea and south of the plain of Esdraelon, the fertile district to which the capital of the Northern Kingdom (from the time of King Omri, ninth century B.C.), the city of Samaria, gave its name, had for its most prominent feature openness. The valleys and

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ridges on the west offered easy access to this region from the coast. On the eastern side there were broad paths of easy gradient. The land was not too difficult for chariots; "all the long drives of the Old Testament are in Samaria," II Kings 5:9, 10; 10:16, 17. So the great commercial highways ran through Samaria and trade with other countries was carried on with ease. Also Samaria was a land easily overrun by invaders from west or east, and few invaders were successfully resisted. Samaria was connected with eastern Palestine. The tribe of Manasseh was settled on both sides of the Jordan and after the disruption of the United Kingdom in 931 B.C., at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign, the land east of the Jordan River fell to the Northern Kingdom, or Israel, with its center in the region of Samaria.

Another result of the openness of Samaria was that "the surrounding paganism poured into her ample life; and although to her was granted the honor of the first great victories against it—Gideon's and Elijah's—she suffered the luxury that came after to take away her crown. From Amos to Isaiah the sins she is charged with are those of a civilization that has been ripe, and is rotten—drunkenness, clumsy art, servile imitation of foreigners, thoughtlessness, and cruelty."³ Political conditions were unstable, as is shown by the fact that nine dynasties of kings ruled within a little over two hundred years in the Northern Kingdom (931–722 B.C.), while in the Southern Kingdom, or Judah, with its capital at Jerusalem, the Davidic

³ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," page 331.

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dynasty ruled nearly three hundred and fifty years (931–587 B.C.) or nearly one hundred and fifty years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom.

The position of Judea was isolated and unattractive, yet in the Old Testament period she was the greatest of all the regions of Palestine in her moral and spiritual contribution to the world. Judea was the seat of the one enduring dynasty of the Hebrews, the Davidic; the site of their Temples: Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod the Great's (the last named was the Temple of the New Testament period); and the platform of most of the chief prophets: Micah, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Joel.

"It is singular how much of an island is this inland province. With the gulf of the Arabah to the east, with the desert to the south, and lifted high and unattractive above the line of traffic, which sweeps past her on the west, Judea is separated as much as by water from the two great continents, to both of which she otherwise belongs. So open at many points, the land was yet sufficiently unpromising and sufficiently remote to keep unprovoked foreigners away. When they were provoked and did come upon her, then they found the waterlessness of her central plateau an almost insuperable obstacle to the prolonged sieges, which the stubbornness of her people forced them to make against her capital and other fortresses."⁴

Not so fertile as Samaria, Judea with a lack of water and a lack of soil was especially a pastoral land — a

⁴ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pages 297, 298.

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land of shepherds with their sheep and goats and cattle — though there was also agriculture and especially vine culture, Gen. 49:11; Num. 13:23. Judea was by nature unfit for the growth of a great city. She had "no harbors, no river, no great trunk road, no convenient market for the nations on either side of her. . . . The whole plateau stands aloof, waterless, on the road to nowhere. There are none of the natural conditions of a great city. And yet it was here that she arose who, more than Athens and more than Rome, taught the nations civic justice, and gave her name to the ideal city men are ever striving to build on earth, to the City of God that shall one day descend from heaven — the New Jerusalem. . . . On that secluded and barren site, the Word of God, by her prophets, laid her eternal foundations in righteousness, and reared her walls in her people's faith in God." ⁵

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

(Chapters IV and V)

1. Bound the Old Testament world. Discuss Palestine's central location.
2. What is the origin of the name "Palestine"? What is the area of the Holy Land? What are some of the great views?
3. What is the size of the Lake of Galilee? the Dead Sea? What part does the Jordan play in Old Testament history?
4. Give the sections of Palestine from west to east. What is the significance of each section in Old Testament history?
5. Discuss the climate of Palestine; the food products.

⁵ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pages 319, 320. See Chapters XIII-XV, on Judea, and Chapter XVI, on Samaria.

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What is the value of a knowledge of the language and customs of the Holy Land?

6. Make a comparison of Samaria and Judea.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Read Deut. 8:7-9; 11:9-12, and note what these references tell about Palestine.

2. Draw on a map of the United States a map of the Old Testament world, using the same scale. Make a map of the Old Testament world, showing the international highways. On a map of Palestine note the neighbors of the Hebrews.

3. Make a study of roads and travel in Old Testament times. What were the motives for traveling? the methods? the accommodations for travelers?

4. Fix clearly in mind the exact location of the following cities of the Old Testament world: Ur in southern Babylonia; Haran, six hundred miles northwest of Ur; Babylon; Nineveh; Carchemish, sixty miles west of Haran, the location of the great ford of the Euphrates; Damascus; Tyre and Sidon, the chief cities of Phœnicia; Thebes and Memphis in Egypt.

5. Jerusalem was surrendered by the Turks, December 11, 1917, and General Allenby took formal possession of the city. Make a study of conditions in Palestine to-day under English rule, with special emphasis on government, railroad lines, improvement of roads, Jewish colonies, and the use of the Hebrew language.

6. What was the effect of the climate and fertility of Palestine upon its population? ⁶

7. Make a study of the occupations of the people living in Palestine in Bible times: shepherds, farmers, carpenters, masons, workers in metals, makers of cloth, bakers, merchants. Note that the shepherd in taking care of his flock of sheep and goats and cattle had to be with the animals night and day to protect them from wild animals and robbers, I Sam. 17:34, 35; John 10:11-15. The farmer did not live on an isolated farm as an American farmer does, but resided in a village or city and went out to the plot of land which he cultivated. This plot might be at some distance from his home.

⁶ See especially G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Chapter III.

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8. Make a study of city and village life: the city walls; the flat-roofed houses, the material of which they were made and the method of construction; the narrow, crooked streets; and the bazaars (collections of small shops, those dealing in the same articles grouped together).

9. Make a study of agricultural methods, particularly of the use of the one-handled plow, the threshing sledge, etc., and note how simple these methods were compared with our modern methods. Make a list of products mentioned in the books of Genesis, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. See especially the following passages: Gen. 25:34; 27:28; Num. 13:23; Deut. 6:11; 8:7-9; 11:9-12; 32:14; Judg. 7:13; I Sam. 14:25; 25:18; II Sam. 17:28, 29; I Kings 4:25; Ps. 81:16; Isa. 1:8; Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:5; Micah 7:1.

10. Other topics of interest to the student of the Bible are: Oriental dress; family life; marriage and funeral customs; bargaining and trading customs.

CHAPTER VI

THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ARCHÆOLOGY

The life of many centuries ago is made very real and full of interest (and a great light is thrown upon the Old Testament) by the excavations and discoveries which have been and are being made in Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, and Palestine.

At the beginning of the last century no word of the inscriptions of Egypt or of Assyria-Babylonia could be read. Practically all that was then known of these countries was found in classical writings or in the Old Testament. To-day the discoveries constantly being made give such a wealth of material that book after book is written on the life of these ancient countries.

The story of the decipherment of the hieroglyphics or picture writing of the ancient Egyptians and of the cuneiform or wedge-shaped writing of Assyria-Babylonia is a wonderful romance. The Rosetta Stone found in Egypt in A.D. 1799 was the key to the Egyptian language. On it is an inscription in three languages, one of these Greek which could be easily read. The other two proved to be different forms of the Egyptian language. Jean François Champollion, a French scholar, decided when he was only eleven years old to devote his energies to the deciphering of the unknown language. He studied history and languages extensively, and succeeded in reading the long-forgotten writing. He published his reading of the Rosetta

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Stone in 1822, when he was thirty-two years old. Before his death ten years later he had translated many Egyptian texts. The key to the Assyrian-Babylonian language was an inscription about twelve feet high in three languages, Persian, Susian, and Babylonian, carved on the face of the rock some five hundred feet above the plain at Behistun in Persia. In 1835 an English army officer, Sir Henry C. Rawlinson, first climbed the cliff, with great difficulty and at the risk of his life, and copied the inscription which he and other scholars succeeded in deciphering after twenty years of work.

One of the most remarkable discoveries of archæology is the Code of Hammurabi, who reigned in Babylonia in the twenty-second and twenty-first centuries B.C., about nine hundred years before the time of Moses. This, the oldest code of laws known to us today, was discovered in A.D. 1901-1902 at the site of the ancient Persian capital, Susa. Two hundred and forty-eight separate laws are preserved, all civil or criminal. In some instances the laws are similar to or practically identical with the laws found in Ex., chs. 20-23, and elsewhere in the Pentateuch. This is to be expected, for the Hebrews like the Babylonians were a Semitic people. The Code shows that there was a highly developed civilization in Babylonia four thousand years ago. Two interesting laws dealt respectively with the physician and the builder. Fees were fixed for certain operations by the physician and also penalties for unskillful treatment. If the patient died or lost his eyesight, the doctor's hand was cut off. If a slave died as the result of the doctor's treatment, the physician had to give another slave to the owner. Builders were re-

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sponsible for their handiwork. If a house fell and killed the owner, the builder was put to death. If the son of the owner was killed, the son of the builder was put to death. If a slave was killed, the builder was compelled to give another to the owner. Any damage because of defective work was to be made good by the builder.

The mummy of Ramses II, probably the Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites in Egypt in the thirteenth century B.C., and the mummy of his son and successor, Menepthah, probably the Pharaoh of the Exodus, are to-day in the museum in Cairo, Egypt. Excavation of the city of Pithom in the northeast of the Egyptian delta, built by the Israelites in the time of Moses, Ex. 1:11, showed that it was founded in the reign of Ramses II. Certain rooms in some of the buildings were rectangular, with walls from six to nine feet thick made of two kinds of bricks, some with and some without straw. The rooms did not communicate with one another, were open only at the top, and were filled from above with grain. These buildings were used as granaries to supply provisions to Egyptian armies on the way to Asia, and as fortresses to protect the eastern frontier of Egypt.¹ "In the lower courses of bricks straw was actually found, but in the middle row reed or sedge had been used, while in the uppermost courses the straw or reeds had withered away, but the marks in the clay testified to their former presence."²

¹ See J. H. Breasted, "A History of Egypt," Figure 162, and Cambridge Bible, Exodus, page 4.

² P. S. P. Handcock, "The Latest Light on Bible Lands," pages 73, 74; cf. Ex. 5:7, 8.

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Meneptah's inscription, found in A.D. 1896, contains the earliest mention of Israel occurring on any inscription found thus far: "Israel is desolated, his seed is not."³

The next mention of Israel known to us to-day is nearly four hundred years later when Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria in the ninth century B.C., mentions Ahab, king of the Northern Kingdom. Papyri found in Egypt tell us of a Jewish community there in the fifth century B.C. The Assyrian inscriptions tell us much about the end of the Northern Kingdom and about the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, both in the eighth century B.C., but they do not mention the events that led to the fall of the Southern Kingdom in the sixth century B.C., nor do they tell us about the life of the Jews during the period of exile in Babylonia in the same century. Certain kings are mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions: Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea, of the Northern Kingdom; and Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, of Judah. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, tells us that he shut up King Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city."

The remains of the palaces of Omri and Ahab at their capital city, Samaria, in the Northern Kingdom were discovered in A.D. 1909-1910. In Ahab's palace the excavators found an alabaster vase inscribed with the name of the king of Egypt who was a contemporary of King Ahab. An interesting discovery made at

³ See J. H. Breasted, "A History of Egypt," Figure 171, and G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," fourth edition, page 338.

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Jerusalem in A.D. 1880 was the Siloam inscription on the wall in the entrance of a tunnel which King Hezekiah of Judah had cut through the solid rock in the eighth century B.C. The tunnel or conduit is nearly a third of a mile in length and about six feet in height, and goes from the Virgin's Spring which lies outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem to the pool of Siloam. In Hezekiah's time it brought the water within the city walls, depriving the enemy invader of its use, and securing the water supply for the inhabitants during a siege. Cf. II Kings 20:20. The inscription tells how the workmen began boring at each end and how they met in the middle. Just before meeting, while they were still about five feet from each other, the rock broke into a fissure so that they could hear each other's voices. How delighted they must have been to know that their work was practically completed! This inscription and the Calendar inscription discovered at Gezer in Palestine in A.D. 1908 are the oldest known Hebrew inscriptions.

New light has been thrown on the condition of Canaan before the Hebrew occupation under Joshua by the discovery of the Tel-el-Amarna letters in Egypt, A.D. 1887-1888. These letters, which were written about 1400 B.C., consist of nearly four hundred clay tablets in the cuneiform characters of Babylonia. Seven of these tablets were written by a king of Jerusalem, probably a Hittite, three hundred and fifty years before David took the city from the Canaanites and made it the capital of the United Kingdom. The use of the Babylonian language by Egyptian officials in Palestine and neighboring countries in communi-

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cating with the king of Egypt shows that it was the language of international communication, and suggests that Canaan, before it became a province of the Egyptian Empire, had been under Babylonian influence for centuries, possibly from the time of Hammurabi, or ever earlier. Egyptian control in Palestine lasted from about 1600 to 1200 B.C.⁴

Some of the cities which have been excavated in Palestine are: Jerusalem, Jericho, Gezer, Samaria, Beth-shemesh, Lachish, Taanach, Megiddo, Gibeah of Saul, Beth-shean, and Shiloh. At the last-mentioned place only trial pits or shafts have been sunk. Two of the most interesting places are Lachish and Gezer. Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem, has been called a "mound of many cities" because the mound contained in its sixty-five feet of accumulated débris the remains of eight different cities, one above the other, ranging in antiquity from one built about 1700 B.C., the lowest city, to one built about 350 B.C., the city at the top, after the destruction of which the site was deserted. The age of each city has been determined by the pottery, lamps, and objects of stone, bronze, and iron found in it, and, in one city, by a small Assyrian cuneiform tablet. A Semitic people were the first inhabitants of Lachish. They entered Palestine about 2500 B.C., immigrants like the Hebrews. One of these buried towns was the city taken by Joshua; another city, nearer the top of the mound, was that besieged and captured by Sennacherib, king of Assyria, in 701 B.C.

⁴ For a translation of some of the letters from Palestine, see G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," fourth edition, pages 403 ff.

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The buildings of Lachish were constructed of sun-dried bricks, blocks of clay or mud held together by chopped straw. The first city stood on a natural hill fifty to sixty feet above the bed of a neighboring stream. This city was abandoned, perhaps because the water supply failed, or because there was war, pillage, fire, famine, or pestilence. The mud houses then fell into ruins, and, as the streets and open spaces were filled with the remains of the fallen walls and roofs, the *débris* raised the level of the ground several feet higher than the old level. When a second city was built on the site of the former city — a city in most places without rock foundations — it naturally stood some feet above the original town. Refuse thrown from the houses into the streets also gradually raised the level. The objects left in the ruins of one city were thus completely buried under the buildings of another city. This happened again and again until eight cities had been built, one on top of another.

As one city is uncovered by the excavators, and before the next is excavated, the remains of houses and other buildings are measured, plans are drawn, photographs are taken, and the various objects found in the ruins are tabulated. Every basket of *débris* is carefully examined before the dirt is carried away to see if it contains any objects worth preserving. Sometimes a small gratuity is given to the native workers for all objects found which are worth preserving. This *baksheesh* is divided equally among the gangs (groups of about fourteen people, consisting in some cases of two pickmen, three hoe men, and nine men with baskets) in whose pit the object is found, so that each

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member watches the other. This prevents pilfering of objects for private trading. To increase mutual vigilance those associated in one gang are sometimes taken from different villages.

The oldest city at Gezer, northwest of Jerusalem, belonged to the pre-Semitic period, 3000-2500 B.C., and was occupied by a non-Semitic people who dwelt usually in caves, who were short of stature, being only about five feet six inches in height, and whose implements were of stone. About 2500 B.C., a Semitic race took possession of the city. We read of the Gezer of Solomon's time in I Kings 9:16. The inhabitants of the last city at the top of the mound probably deserted their homes in the second century B.C. A palace of the Maccabæan period, the second century B.C., has been discovered. Here was found a fragment of building stone upon which was a curse written in Greek characters by some Syrian: "May fire pursue Simon's palace." This was a reference to Simon Maccabæus.

The high place at Gezer was the scene of some worship that was corrupt and demoralizing. "Archæology has here revealed to us in a most vivid way the tremendous power of those corrupting religious influences which the Hebrew prophets so vigorously denounced. These practices were deeply rooted in the customs of the Canaanites; they were sanctified by a supposed divine sanction of immemorial antiquity, and they made an all-powerful appeal to the animal instincts in human nature. We can realize now as never before the social and religious task which confronted the prophets. That Israel was by prophetic teaching

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purged of this cult (Ashtoreth) is due to the power of God.”⁵

Many sites in Palestine and elsewhere remain to be excavated. Some of them are mounds which to the eyes of many travelers seem to be only natural hills. A trial pit made by the excavator tells whether there is a city underneath to be dug out. In the future wonderful discoveries may be made by the archæologist, and new light may thus be thrown upon the Bible.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How were the languages of Egypt and of Assyria-Babylonia deciphered?
2. What is the importance of the Code of Hammurabi?
3. What discoveries in Egypt and in Assyria throw light upon the Old Testament?
4. What do we learn from the Siloam inscription?
5. How were cities in Palestine buried underneath other cities?
6. What is the value of the study of archæology in Bible lands?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Discuss the preservation of antiquities in Egypt and in Assyria-Babylonia.
2. Study the story of the exploration of Palestine and of the excavations and discoveries there which bear on the Old Testament.

* G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," fourth edition, page 189.

CHAPTER VII

THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW NATION

The story of the Hebrew people from Abraham's time to the time of Nehemiah is found in the Old Testament. Abraham, a Hebrew of the line of Shem, left Babylonia, and came into southern Palestine. Later his great-grandchild, Joseph, was sold by his brothers and taken to Egypt where he became governor, next in authority to the Pharaoh, the Egyptian king. Joseph's brothers, because of famine, came from Palestine into Egypt to buy grain and finally, with Jacob their father, settled in Goshen, a pastoral district in lower Egypt. **(Book of Genesis.)**

The patriarchs lived a nomadic, pastoral life. Their homes were tents made of black goats' hair or of skins. Their wealth consisted of movable property: cattle, sheep, goats, camels, gold and silver, tents, garments, and slaves. Quarrels often arose over pasture and wells. Later in the history of the Israelites, when they were living in houses in the cities and villages of Palestine, a Kenite tribe called the Rechabites, who lived among the Hebrews, aimed to return to the simplicity of the nomadic days and protested against the civilization which the Hebrews had inherited by their settlement in Canaan. The Rechabites would not drink wine, cultivate the ground, or dwell in houses, but lived a wandering life, dwelling in tents. II Kings 10:15; Jer., ch. 35.

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Many years later, in the thirteenth century B.C., a Pharaoh of Egypt, probably Ramses II, practically enslaved the Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, or Israel, compelling them to labor at brickmaking. With Moses as their leader they made their "exodus" or departure from Egypt, probably in the reign of Menep-tah, the son and successor of Ramses II. They received laws from Moses and for about forty years lived a nomadic life in the wilderness south of Palestine and east of Egypt. They made their headquarters for a great part of the time at Kadesh-barnea, fifty miles south of Beer-sheba and eleven days' journey from Mount Sinai. Their sanctuary like their dwelling places was a tent. (**Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.**)

Later, under Joshua, the land of Canaan or Palestine was partially conquered, and from that time the Israelites gradually passed from the nomadic to the agricultural stage of society. They began to live in houses rather than tents, they owned land in villages and cities, and they learned the art of agriculture from the Canaanites. (**Book of Joshua.**) Next followed the period of the Judges or Deliverers, among whom were Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. At this time the Canaanites met a final defeat on the plain of Esdraelon. (**The Books of Judges and Ruth.**) With the help of Samuel a monarchy was established, and Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, became the first king. David, of the tribe of Judah, his successor, extended the borders of the United Kingdom, and captured from the Canaanites the strongly fortified city of Jerusalem, making it the national capital. The

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power of the Philistines was broken. (**Books of I and II Samuel.**) In the reign of Solomon, David's son, a Temple, a palace, and other buildings were constructed by the Israelites with the aid of skilled Phœnician workmen. In 931 B.C., at the close of Solomon's reign, the United Kingdom came to an end. Jeroboam, of the tribe of Ephraim, became the king of the Northern Kingdom or Israel, and Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, the king of the Southern Kingdom or Judah. (**Book of I Kings.**)

Three fourths of Palestine, the more fertile and populous part, fell to Israel. The Northern Kingdom, which from the time of Omri had its capital at Samaria, thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem, continued for more than two hundred years, 931-722 B.C. It had nineteen kings with nine changes of family: Jeroboam I and son; Baasha and son; Zimri; Omri dynasty, four kings; Jehu dynasty, five kings; Shallum; Menahem and son; Pekah; and Hoshea. The Southern Kingdom, with its capital at Jerusalem, existed nearly one hundred and fifty years longer than the Northern Kingdom, coming to an end in 587 B.C. It had nineteen kings and one queen in a period of nearly three hundred and fifty years, and only one dynasty, the Davidic, which was on the throne of Judah for over four hundred years (about 1011 B.C., beginning of David's reign, to 587 B.C., fall of Jerusalem and end of Southern Kingdom). (**Books of I and II Kings, and I and II Chronicles.**)

The Northern Kingdom of Israel. Rehoboam, son of Solomon, went to Shechem to have his succession

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to the throne of the United Kingdom confirmed by a national assembly. The people were dissatisfied and asked that the burdens of Solomon's government be lightened. The king was insolent, refused the request, and sent the aged Adoniram, who was over the forced labor, to quell the revolt. The people stoned Adoniram to death. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem. Jeroboam, who had fled from Solomon into Egypt, returned and was elected king by the people of the seceding tribes convened at Shechem. The prophets Ahijah and Shemaiah favored Jeroboam. Only one complete tribe, Judah, and a part of Benjamin, were left to the house of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin as a whole went with Jeroboam. The tribes north of Jerusalem and east of the Jordan formed the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam chose Shechem as the capital of his kingdom. From Jeroboam's reign until Omri's reign, Penuel east of the Jordan and Tirzah near Shechem were in turn the residences of the kings of Israel. At Dan and at Beth-el Jeroboam set up golden calves, images of Jehovah, wishing to counteract the influence of the Temple of Jerusalem. Dan and Beth-el thus became the chief sanctuaries of the Northern Kingdom. There was war between the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, for about sixty years.

Nadab, son of Jeroboam, was murdered by Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar, probably one of his generals, who put to death the whole family of Jeroboam and then usurped the throne of Israel. He fortified Ramah, five miles north of Jerusalem, in order to cut off Asa, king of Judah, from trade. The blockade was so successful that Asa took the treasures of the palace

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and of the Temple of Jerusalem and induced Ben-hadad I, of the Syrian or Aramæan Kingdom, whose capital was Damascus, to break his league with Israel and attack Baasha. Ben-hadad invaded the Northern Kingdom and took a number of towns in the north. Elah, who succeeded his father Baasha, was murdered (while he was intoxicated) by Zimri, one of his officers. Zimri, after putting to death all the house of Baasha, reigned only a week. Omri, general of the army, was elected king by the soldiers and immediately marched with his army against Tirzah where Zimri was reigning. The latter set fire to the palace and perished in the flames. Tibni disputed the throne and gained a strong following, but he was put to death by Omri. "The people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni . . . so Tibni died, and Omri reigned." I Kings 16:22.

Omri was the founder of the strongest dynasty in the Northern Kingdom. In the Assyrian inscriptions, even after the passing of Omri and of his dynasty, the Northern Kingdom is called the "land of Omri," an indication of his great reputation as a ruler. Omri chose a new site for his capital and for his royal residence, Samaria, five miles northwest of Shechem, and thirty-five miles from Jerusalem. This city stood on the crest of a round, isolated hill, which rose more than three hundred feet above the level of the broad valley. This hill was made into an almost impregnable fortress. Samaria was the capital of Israel until taken by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. after a siege of three years.

The inscription of Mesha, king of Moab, or the "Moabite Stone," mentions by name "Omri . . .

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king of Israel ” and speaks of “ his son,” probably Ahab who succeeded him. The inscription was found in A.D. 1868 east of the Jordan in the territory of ancient Moab. It contains Mesha’s own account of the revolt which took place after Ahab’s death, and which is recorded in II Kings 1:1; ch. 3. According to II Kings 3:27, Mesha sacrificed to Chemosh, the national deity of the Moabites, upon the wall of his besieged capital, his eldest son “ that should have reigned in his stead.”

There was war between the Northern Kingdom and Syria, war which began in Baasha’s reign and continued with intermissions until the time of Jeroboam II, in the eighth century B.C. In the reign of Omri’s son, Ahab, the capital, Samaria, was besieged by the Syrian army under Ben-hadad II, but the Syrians were defeated by Ahab. The campaign was renewed the next year, when the Syrians were again defeated and had to agree to restore the cities taken from Omri by Ben-hadad I. At this time Israel was given certain streets for bazaars in Damascus. After three years of peace with Syria war was resumed. An attempt was made to recover Ramoth-gilead, east of the Jordan, which the Syrians had not evacuated. The four hundred professional court prophets were consulted, and Micaiah as the true prophet of Jehovah showed his courage and independence. Ahab was mortally wounded in battle at Ramoth-gilead and died before reaching Samaria. Jehoshaphat of Judah assisted Ahab since at this time there was an alliance of Israel with Judah — Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, being the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehosha-

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phat. Ahab was an ally of Damascus of Syria, 854 B.C., in an attempt to repel an Assyrian invasion, and is mentioned in the inscription of the Assyrian monarch, Shalmaneser III, 859-824 B.C.: "Two thousand chariots, ten thousand men of Ahab, the Israelite."

Elisha, the disciple and successor of Elijah, went to Damascus and had a share in the displacing of Ben-hadad II, who was smothered to death by Hazael. The latter seized the Aramæan throne and founded a new dynasty in Syria. On the accession of Hazael, Jehoram, son of Ahab, with his nephew Ahaziah, king of Judah (the son of Athaliah and Jehoram of Judah), made an expedition against Syria. Jehu, the commanding officer next to the king in the army of Israel, was anointed king at Ramoth-gilead, east of the Jordan (now in possession of Israel), by one of the prophets, at the request of Elisha, and his authority was acknowledged by the army, which proclaimed him king. Jehoram of Israel had been wounded in battle at Ramoth-gilead and returned to the palace at Jezreel, whither Jehu went and there put Jehoram to death and mortally wounded Ahaziah of Judah, who was visiting his uncle, Jehoram. Jehu also put to death Queen Jezebel, mother of Jehoram of Israel, many royal princes, descendants of Ahab, and many royal princes of Judah, also many supporters of the Omri house, prophets, priests, and adherents of Baal worship in Israel. The temple of Baal at Samaria was destroyed. For Hosea's adverse judgment upon the house of Jehu see Hos. 1:4; cf. II Kings 10:11. See Amos 7:9 for the judgment of Amos against Jeroboam II of the Jehu dynasty.

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Jehu paid tribute to the king of Assyria, Shalmaneser III, and was mentioned among other tributary kings on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser in 842 B.C. Assyria was the dominant power in the Northern Kingdom from this time until the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.

In Jehu's reign Hazael, the king of Syria, made war against Israel and gained some territory east of the Jordan. In the reign of Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, the Syrian wars continued, and Israel became subject to the kings of Syria, Hazael and Ben-hadad III, his son. Jehoahaz had only fifty horsemen, ten war chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers left. The siege of Samaria by the Syrians, II Kings 6:24-33; ch. 7, probably belongs to the reign of Jehoahaz. But Syria was weakened by Assyrian attacks, and Jehoash (Joash), son of Jehoahaz, defeated the Syrians and recovered the cities taken from his father.

The reign of Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash (Joash), was long and prosperous; he was the most successful king the Northern Kingdom had from the time of its separation from Judah until its downfall. Jeroboam recovered the territory of Israel which had been lost. He is probably the deliverer mentioned in II Kings 13:5; cf. ch. 14: 26, 27. During his reign there were weak kings in Assyria.

After the death of Jeroboam II the Northern Kingdom became the prey of rival factions which weakened the country with their strife, and a period of anarchy followed. Zechariah, son of Jeroboam II, was the last king of Jehu's dynasty. He had reigned only six months when he was murdered by Shallum who usurped the throne. Shallum in turn was assassinated after a

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reign of one month by Menahem, another usurper, who established himself as king only after much bloodshed. He gave to Tiglath-pileser IV, king of Assyria, 745-727 B.C., tribute which he exacted of the well-to-do men of Israel, and the Assyrian king confirmed Menahem's position on the throne. In an inscription relating to the year 738 B.C., the Assyrian ruler, the "Pul" of II Kings 15:19 (see v. 29), mentions "Menahem of Samaria" among other tributary princes of western Asia. Pekahiah succeeded his father Menahem, but was murdered by Pekah, a captain of the army, who seized the throne. Pekah was anti-Assyrian while Pekahiah, like Menahem, was a vassal of the Assyrian Empire and pro-Assyrian.

The Syro-Ephraimitic War broke out in 734 B.C. in the reigns of Pekah, of Israel, and Jotham, of Judah, and continued into the reign of Ahaz, Jotham's successor. Pekah and Rezin, the king of Damascus, attempted to compel Ahaz, of Judah, to join in a league against Assyria. On his refusal Judah was invaded by an army of the allies, Syria and Israel, who wished to dethrone Ahaz and set up an obscure adventurer as king of Judah. Ahaz at the cost of his independence asked for help from the Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser IV, who invaded the territory of Damascus and Israel and made necessary the withdrawal of the forces of the Northern Kingdom and Syria from Judah. In 734 B.C. Tiglath-pileser took various districts in the north and east of Israel and carried away large numbers of the inhabitants into captivity in Assyria. In 732 B.C. the Assyrian king took Damascus and slew Rezin, the king. Pekah was slain by Hoshea who was appointed

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by Tiglath-pileser. Both Pekah and Hoshea are mentioned in an inscription of the Assyrian king.

Hoshea as a vassal of Assyria paid tribute to Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria, 727–722 B.C., but later he was discovered in treasonable relations with So, king of Egypt. The pro-Egyptian party was probably in control in the Northern Kingdom. Since Hoshea had withheld the annual tribute to Assyria, Shalmaneser came up against him, and the city of Samaria was besieged for three years. Hoshea was taken captive. Before the fall of the city of Samaria, Shalmaneser died and Sargon II, his successor, 722–705 B.C., continued the siege, and captured the city in his first year. In order to prevent any future rebellions he carried into captivity to different parts of the Assyrian Empire over twenty-seven thousand inhabitants of Israel. These were, for the most part, absorbed by the peoples in the regions where they settled. Only a portion of the total population was deported at this time and in 734 B.C., II Kings 15:29, persons of importance and wealth being taken while the poorer classes were left behind. The Northern Kingdom became a province of the Assyrian Empire; Assyrian officers were placed in charge; and tribute was reimposed. An account of the taking of Samaria in harmony with the Biblical account is found in the Annals of Sargon.

Sargon brought foreign colonists to settle in the cities of Israel in place of the deported Israelites. Later a colony was settled in the province of Samaria by Esar-haddon, king of Assyria, 680–669 B.C., Ezra 4:2; and a third colonization took place under Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria, 668–626 B.C., the “Osnap-

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par"¹ of Ezra 4:10. The Samaritans were descendants by intermarriage of the Israelites left in the Northern Kingdom and the colonists who were brought in. After the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile in 538 B.C., the Samaritan's offer to help in the building of the second Temple (537-515 B.C.) was refused, and the Jews excluded them from all participation in their worship, Ezra 4:1-3. We read in the Gospel of John of the hatred between Jews and Samaritans in the New Testament period. John 4:9; 8:48. To-day the Samaritans are a small community of about one hundred and fifty people at Nablus (Shechem) in Palestine, thirty miles north of Jerusalem.

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The Elisha narratives are found in II Kings 4:1-8:15. II Kings 6:24-7:20, Elisha during the siege of Samaria, probably belongs to the reign of Jehoahaz, king of Israel.

¹ Davis, "A Dictionary of the Bible," says: "He seems to have been either Esar-haddon or one of his officials. The name is supposed by some to be a rude Aramaic form of Ashurbanipal."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW NATION

(Continued)

The Southern Kingdom of Judah. Shishak of Egypt (Sheshenk I, about 945–924 B.C.) carried on a campaign against the two Hebrew kingdoms, and in Rehoboam's reign took from Jerusalem the treasures of the palace and of the Temple and the golden shields which Solomon had made. A list on a wall of the Temple of Karnak in Upper Egypt contains the names of cities both in Israel and in Judah which Shishak claimed to have conquered or to have made tributary.

One of the most important kings of Judah's first century was Jehoshaphat, an ally of Ahab and of Jehoram of Israel against the Syrians and the Moabites. We read of a religious reformation which took place in his reign, and of the reorganization of the Temple worship at Jerusalem and of the law courts. His son's wife, Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, introduced into Judah the Phœnician Baal worship, just as Jezebel, the Phœnician queen, had introduced it into Israel.

Athaliah seized the throne of Judah on the death of her son Ahaziah. As queen mother she had a place of influence and dignity at the court and exercised a certain amount of authority. (Note the attitude of Bathsheba toward David, and note also her son Solomon's attitude toward her, I Kings 1:16, 28; 2:19.) Athaliah had all the princes of the royal house of Judah mur-

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dered; but unknown to her Jehoash (Joash), her grandson, son of Ahaziah, was saved from the massacre by his aunt, the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada. Athaliah protected the Phœnician Baal worship, but the worship of Jehovah was maintained in the Temple.

Jehoiada, the high priest, organized a revolt, and on the Sabbath Day, when great numbers of the country people were gathered at Jerusalem, he concentrated the foreign mercenaries and other guards at the Temple. Probably the mixed population of Jerusalem was favorable to Athaliah, so that Jehoiada had to rely upon the people of the land, the country people. Jehoash, the boy king, sole survivor of the Davidic house, was crowned, and Athaliah was slain beyond the Temple precincts. She was the only woman who reigned in the Southern Kingdom and there was never a woman ruler in the Northern Kingdom.

Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign, and Jehoiada, the chief priest, his uncle, acted as his guardian. Jehoash and the people renewed their allegiance to Jehovah in a solemn covenant, and the temple of Baal in Jerusalem was destroyed. After Jehoiada's death, however, there was a revival of idolatry in Jerusalem, and Zechariah, his son, was stoned to death in the Temple courts by order of Jehoash.

Hazael, of Syria, threatened Jerusalem, and Jehoash to save the city gave the Syrian king tribute taken from the Temple and the palace treasuries. Jehoash was murdered by two servants. Amaziah, his son, put the murderers to death, but their children were spared, Deut. 24:16. For the older practice see Josh. 7:24-26, the death of Achan; II Sam. 21:1-6, the death of Saul's

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sons and grandsons; II Kings 9:26, the death of Naboth's sons.

Amaziah was defeated in war by Jehoash, king of Israel, who attacked Jerusalem from the north, the only side of the city where the fortifications were not surrounded by deep ravines, broke down two hundred yards of the wall, and plundered the Temple and the palace. Perhaps in consequence of this defeat, Amaziah was put to death by one of his subjects and the young prince Azariah, or Uzziah, was put on the throne.

There was peace between Judah and Israel during Uzziah's long reign, which was the most prosperous period from the days of Solomon to the days of captivity in 587 B.C. There was an increase of building and trade, and of wealth and luxury. Owing to the fact that Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy towards the close of his reign, Jotham, his son, reigned as regent for about ten or fifteen years during his father's lifetime.

Ahaz, son of Jotham, refused to join the coalition of Israel and Syria against Assyria, relying for aid upon Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to whom he appealed. Ahaz paid for this aid by becoming a vassal of Tiglath-pileser and by having to pay as tribute gold and silver from the Temple and the palace treasuries, and even metal stripped from the Temple furnishings. As a vassal of Assyria Ahaz went to Damascus, which had been part of Assyria since 732 B.C., to pay homage to the Assyrian king. He sent a pattern of the altar at Damascus, probably an Assyrian altar, to the chief priest at Jerusalem and a new altar was made for the Temple after the foreign model. The first mention of Judah and of a ruler of Judah in the Assyrian inscriptions is

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in a list of those who paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser IV: "Tribute of Jehoahaz [Ahaz] of Judah." The Northern Kingdom was first mentioned a century earlier when Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria, referred to Ahab.

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, carried out a religious reformation. The reform was only partial, however, for the high places near Jerusalem built by Solomon were not disturbed until 621 B.C. when they were destroyed by Josiah, king of Judah. Hezekiah's attempt to centralize the national worship at Jerusalem and to abolish the high places or rural shrines, while not a complete success, made possible the later reformation of Josiah's reign.

Sargon II, king of Assyria, 722-705 B.C., was succeeded by Sennacherib, 705-681 B.C. With the death of Sargon practically the whole of Palestine and Syria rose in rebellion. Egypt sought an alliance with Hezekiah and promised aid. Isa., chs. 30; 31. Sennacherib invaded Judah and captured forty-six of its cities. Then he blockaded Jerusalem, shutting up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." At first Hezekiah bought off the Assyrians with heavy tribute. Later Sennacherib's army approached again, and another attempt was made to compel Jerusalem to surrender. But the Assyrian army was struck by pestilence or plague, and Sennacherib returned to Assyria, unable to carry out his plan successfully. The campaign of Sennacherib is referred to in a cuneiform Assyrian account which agrees with II Kings 18:13b-16.

The reign of Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, was long and peaceful. He was a vassal of Assyria and his name

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occurs on a list of the tributary princes of Esar-haddon and Ashurbanipal, kings of Assyria. There was religious reaction under Manasseh and syncretism, the blending of foreign forms of worship with Canaanite cults. The antiprophetic party was in control in Jerusalem, and there was a revival of Canaanite worship and of idolatry, Baal altars, soothsaying, necromancy, and child sacrifice. Manasseh sacrificed his son by fire as Ahaz had done. The high places destroyed by Hezekiah were rebuilt. The Babylonian cult, the worship of the host of heaven — sun, moon, and stars — was introduced from Assyria into Jerusalem. The prophets were persecuted. A Jewish tradition says that Isaiah suffered martyrdom during the persecutions of Manasseh. Amon, Manasseh's son, was assassinated by courtiers after a brief reign.

Josiah, son of Amon, was eight years old at his accession. In the eighteenth year of his reign, 621 B.C., the "book of the Law" was found in the Temple, and was publicly read in the Temple courts before a great assembly convened by Josiah. A solemn covenant to observe the law found in the book was made by the king and the people, and afterward a thoroughgoing reform of the public worship was carried out. The national worship was centralized at the Jerusalem Temple, high places or local sanctuaries were abolished, idolatry was suppressed, and the Temple was purified from idolatrous emblems. The high places of Solomon on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, were destroyed, and Topheth, where human sacrifices were offered, was defiled. Josiah did much to bring about the exclusive worship of Jehovah in Judah. The basis

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of the national covenant made in this reign is found in the book of Deuteronomy, which should be compared with II Kings 23:1-25. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, fell, probably in 612 B.C., at the hands of the Medes and Babylonians. Pharaoh-necho, of Egypt, marched northward to assist the retreating Assyrians and on his way through Palestine slew Josiah, perhaps because he was not pro-Egyptian, in a battle at Megiddo on the southwest of the plain of Esdraelon. Josiah died in 608 B.C., and from that year until 604 B.C. Judah was a province of the Egyptian Empire.

Jehoahaz, like his father Josiah, was anti-Egyptian. He was made king by the Judeans. Jehoahaz had reigned only three months when Pharaoh-necho of Egypt dethroned him. Later Pharaoh took him as a prisoner to Egypt where he died. Necho appointed Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king, and a heavy tribute was imposed on the land of Judah.

The reforms of Josiah were followed by a religious reaction in Jehoiakim's reign, just as there had been a religious reaction in Manasseh's reign after Hezekiah's reforms. Idolatries of many kinds reappeared. Jehoiakim was charged by the Prophet Jeremiah with covetousness, the shedding of innocent blood, oppression, and violence. He built a palace with forced, unpaid labor, Jer. 22:13-19; he destroyed Jeremiah's roll of prophecies, Jer., ch. 36; and he murdered the Prophet Uriah, Jer. 26:20-23; cf. Jer. 36:26.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, the second ruler of the new Babylonian Empire, 605-562 B.C., acting as general for his father Nabopo-

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lassar, defeated the Egyptian forces under Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish on the Euphrates. This gave the Babylonians the supremacy of western Asia. Jehoiakim submitted to the Babylonian king and remained a vassal for three years. Then, against the counsel of Jeremiah, he rebelled against Nebuchadrezzar. Babylonian troops from garrisons in Syria, with the help of marauding bands, invaded Judah and entered Jerusalem, Jer. 35:11. The manner of Jehoiakim's death is obscure.

Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, ruled only three months. Soon after his accession Nebuchadrezzar's army besieged Jerusalem and Jehoiachin surrendered to the enemy. The king, the royal family, the court, important leaders, warriors, skilled workmen—the flower of the nation—were taken to Babylonia as exiles. Some of the treasures of the Temple and palace were taken also. Jehoiachin was in a Babylonian prison from 597 to 562 B.C., when he was liberated by Evil-merodach, the new ruler of Babylonia.

Zedekiah, son of Josiah, was made king by Nebuchadrezzar. After a few years, relying upon the help of the king of Egypt, Hophra or Apries, 589–570 B.C., Zedekiah revolted against the Babylonian monarch. Nebuchadrezzar besieged Jerusalem for eighteen months. The approach of the Egyptian army compelled the Babylonians to raise the siege, but only for a short time, for the Egyptians were unable to render any assistance, and were speedily driven back to their own country. The siege was resumed and the city taken in 587. Jerusalem had suffered from famine and pestilence; many soldiers had deserted. The sons

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of Zedekiah were slain and the king himself was blinded and carried to Babylonia as a prisoner. The Temple, the palace, the principal buildings, and many houses were plundered and burned, and the walls of the city were broken down. Some of the leading men, including the chief priest, were put to death. To-day no mention of the events that led to the end of Judah can be found in the Babylonian inscriptions.

Gedaliah, a Judean and a friend of Jeremiah, was made governor of the desolated province by Nebuchadrezzar, his residence being at Mizpah near Jerusalem. After ruling only two months over the people left in the land of Judah, he was murdered by Ishmael, a member of the royal Davidic house.

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The Babylonian Exile. In 598 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar carried to Babylonia seven thousand warriors and

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one thousand skilled workmen. The total was ten thousand, according to II Kings 24:14, the remaining two thousand consisting of King Jehoiachin and his family, nobles and leading men, priests and prophets. These with their families and slaves or servants (women, children, and slaves would probably not be counted), in all about thirty thousand people, were taken to Babylonia. Later, in the years 587, 586, and 582 B.C., others were deported; in all the invasions of Nebuchadrezzar about fifty thousand Jews were exiled. The poorest of the land with a few of the ruling classes who remained loyal, as overseers, were left behind to be vinedressers and tillers of the soil. G. A. Smith¹ estimates the population of Judah before the Babylonian invasion to have been at least two hundred and fifty thousand. The Jews who remained in Judah throughout the period of exile "were the poorest of the land, from whom every man of substance and of energy had been sifted; mere groups of peasants, without a leader and without a center; disorganized and depressed; bitten by hunger and compassed by enemies; uneducated and an easy prey to the heathenism by which they were surrounded. . . . They were a negligible quantity in the religious future of Israel; without initiative or any influence except that of a dead weight upon the efforts of the rebuilders of the nation when these at last returned from Babylonia."²

Many who escaped exile into Babylonia took refuge in Egypt, and centers of Jewish colonization were established in both Lower and Upper Egypt. See Jer.

¹ "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pages 266, 267.

² G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pages 269, 270.

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44:1. It is difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty the number of Jews in Egypt at the beginning of the Exile. Jeremiah speaks of them as constituting "a great assembly," Jer. 44:15. The worship of the queen of heaven, Ishtar, venerated by many of the people of Jerusalem before the fall of that city, was carried on, with the burning of incense and the pouring out of drink offerings. The Jewish women especially were devoted to the ceremonies of this idolatrous Babylonian cult, Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19. From Aramaic papyri discovered in Upper Egypt we learn that there was a large and well-organized Jewish community in Egypt in the fifth century B.C. and that the people wished to rebuild the temple of Yahu (Jehovah) on the island of Elephantine, which had been destroyed. On its altar sacrifices had been offered regularly and the temple was in existence when Cambyses conquered Egypt in 525 B.C.

The best elements of the Jewish people were in Babylonia, for the policy of the Babylonians was to remove the wealthy and influential leaders of the nation in order to do away with the possibility of insurrection. The first group of exiles, who went in 598 B.C., were permitted to settle in Babylonia and to found organized communities with the elders as their civil representatives. The majority of this group were practically free, Jer. 29:1-6. The Prophet Ezekiel lived by the river Chebar, a navigable canal near Nippur, south-east of Babylon, where he had his own house, to which the elders of the Israelites came. Just where the later group of exiles settled and how it fared with them is difficult to say. Some of the leaders were put to death

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at Riblah on the Orontes, north of Palestine. Many of the second group and probably some of the first group were made slaves. See Ezek. 34:27, 28; Isa. 14:3; 42:22; 47:1, 6.

The History from 539 to 515 B.C. In 539 B.C. Cyrus took the city of Babylon and the Babylonian Empire came to an end. The power in the East passed from the Semitic to the Aryan race. After this the Jews were governed in turn by the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires, with a brief period of independence in the second and first centuries B.C. They no longer formed a nation or kingdom in Palestine but rather a religious community.

From an inscription of Cyrus we learn that he conquered the city of Babylon without a blow, and that he permitted those who had been deported to Babylonia to return to their several countries and rebuild their temples.

Permission was given to the Jewish exiles by Cyrus to return from Babylonia to Palestine and to rebuild their Temple at Jerusalem. The Temple utensils which Nebuchadrezzar had carried off as booty were restored. For two centuries the Jewish community in Palestine existed as a Persian province. The leaders of the first group of exiles, who returned in 538 B.C., were Joshua, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, governor of the Persian province of Judah, a grandson of Jehoiachin, and thus a descendant of the royal Davidic house. Only a small territory of about six hundred square miles was occupied by the Jews. Jerusalem became the principal city and the center of Jewish life.

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In 537 B.C. the altar of burnt offering at Jerusalem was rebuilt; worship was resumed; and the foundation of the Temple was formally laid. Samaritans and others opposed the rebuilding of the Temple, so the work was stopped and was not resumed until sixteen years later, 520 B.C. The Temple was completed and dedicated in 515 B.C., over seventy years after the destruction of Solomon's Temple, 587 B.C. "The first Temple had risen as but a part of a great complex of royal buildings, a palace, a judgment hall, barracks, and an arsenal—round the whole of which ran one inclosure. Of these none was now rebuilt. The second Temple rose alone, without civic or political rival, a religious capitol within its own courts and surrounding wall."³

The History from 515 to 432 B.C. The Book of Esther contains the story of Esther, a Jewess who lived in the Persian capital, Susa. She became queen of Ahasuerus, or Xerxes, king of Persia, 486–466 B.C., and delivered the Jews from the destruction planned by Haman, the king's favorite courtier. The book explains the origin of the late Jewish feast of Purim kept in the month of Adar, or February-March, which is not referred to elsewhere in the Old Testament. One notes that a large number of Jews lived in Persia at that time. A second group of exiles with Ezra the priest and scribe as their leader returned to Jerusalem in 458 B.C., during the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 465–425 B.C. A reform against the marriage of Jews with foreigners was carried out, and those who

³ G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pages 309, 310.

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had taken foreign wives were compelled to expel them and their children. Only a part of the exiles returned to Judah since many preferred for commercial and other reasons to remain away from Palestine. Some must have accumulated considerable wealth in Babylonian for we read of large contributions made for religious purposes, Ezra 2:69; 8:25-27.

Some time before 445 B.C. the Jews attempted to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but their work was hindered by misrepresentations made by their enemies, Samaritans and others, to Xerxes (486-466 B.C.) and especially to Artaxerxes (465-425 B.C.), Ezra 4:7-23; Neh. 1:3. Nehemiah, the Jewish cupbearer of Artaxerxes at Shushan (Susa), one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, received permission from the king to visit Jerusalem and to repair the ruined walls, and was made governor of the Jewish province by the king. In 445 B.C. he arrived at Jerusalem and, in spite of the opposition of Samaritans and of other enemies, the city walls were rebuilt and dedicated in less than two months. Many social reforms were carried out.

In 445 B.C. "the book of the law of Moses" was read before a great national assembly at Jerusalem, Neh. 8:1, and the people of Jerusalem and Judah made a solemn covenant to keep it. Emphasis was placed upon the priestly laws in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Ezra, who had possibly been in retirement for a time, was present with Nehemiah.

In 433-432 B.C. Nehemiah made a visit to the Persian court, asked for further leave of absence, and then came back to Jerusalem. Reforms against laxity in Sabbath observance, and against intermarriage with

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foreigners were carried out, Neh. 10:30, and measures were taken to improve the Levitical service at the Temple. The desecration of the Temple was no longer allowed.

The record of this Persian period, with its story of Nehemiah who made his last journey from Persia to Jerusalem in 432 B.C., constitutes the latest history in the Old Testament. Although some of the Old Testament was written after this date, there is no further history of the Hebrews, or Jews, in the Bible until the birth of Jesus is recorded in the New Testament. Other sources than the Bible must be used for history between these dates. The writings of the Jew, Josephus, first century A.D.: "The Wars of the Jews" and "The Antiquities of the Jews;" and The First Book of the Maccabees, in the Apocrypha are especially valuable.

IMPORTANT DATES IN BIBLICAL HISTORY

B.C.

20th century	Hammurabi, of the first dynasty of Babylon. Oldest known code of laws.
13th century	The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.
About 1011-970	David, king of Judah and of the United Kingdom.
About 970-931	Solomon, king of the United Kingdom.
About 931	Division of the United Kingdom. Rehoboam, of the Southern Kingdom, or Judah. Jeroboam I, of the Northern Kingdom, or Israel.
722	Fall of Samaria and end of the Northern Kingdom. Northern Kingdom becomes a province of the Assyrian Empire.
701	Invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria.
621	Reforms of Josiah, king of Judah.

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605	Victory of Nebuchadrezzar over Pharaoh-necho. Palestine becomes a Babylonian province. Babylonia the world power.
598	First deportation of captives, including Jehoiachin, the king, from Judah.
587	Fall of Jerusalem. Second deportation of Jews to Babylonia.
539	Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. End of the Babylonian Empire and establishment of the Persian Empire. Persia the world power.
538	Return of the Jews from Babylonia to Palestine under Zerubbabel.
520-515	The building of the second Temple of Jerusalem.
458	Return of the Jews with Ezra.
445	Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem.
445	Reading of the book of the Law at Jerusalem.
432	Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem.
333	Conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great.
333-166	The Greek period.
166-63	The Maccabæan period.
63	Palestine becomes a part of the Roman province of Syria.
5 or 4	Birth of Jesus Christ.
A.D.	
	30 Crucifixion of Christ.
	35 Conversion of Paul.
	67 Death of Paul.
	66-70 War of Jews against Rome.
70	Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

HEBREW RULERS

The United Kingdom

Saul,⁴ son of Kish, tribe of Benjamin, king of Israel.

David, son of Jesse, tribe of Judah, king of Judah, king of all Israel or the United Kingdom.

Solomon, son of David, king of all Israel or the United Kingdom.

⁴ Died in battle.

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The Divided Kingdom, 931-842 B.C.

Northern Kingdom, or Israel

1. **Jeroboam I**, son of Nebat, tribe of Ephraim.
2. Nadab,⁵ son of Jeroboam I.
3. **Baasha**, son of Ahijah, tribe of Issachar.
4. Elah,⁵ son of Baasha.
5. **Zimri** ⁶ (seven days).
6. **Omri**.
7. Ahab,⁴ son of Omri.
8. Ahaziah, son of Ahab.
9. Jehoram (Joram),⁵ son of Ahab.

Southern Kingdom, or Judah

1. Rehoboam, son of Solomon.
2. Abijam (Abijah), son of Rehoboam.
3. Asa, son of Abijam.
4. Jehoshaphat, son of Asa.
5. Jehoram (Joram), son of Jehoshaphat.
6. Ahaziah,⁵ son of Jehoram.

The Divided Kingdom, 842-722 B.C.

10. **Jehu**, grandson of Nimshi.
11. Jehoahaz, son of Jehu.
12. Jehoash (Joash), son of Jehoahaz.
13. Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash.
14. Zechariah,⁵ son of Jeroboam II (six months).
15. Shallum,⁵ son of Jabesh (one month).
16. **Menahem**, son of Gadi.
17. Pekahiah,⁵ son of Menahem.
18. **Pekah**,⁵ son of Remaliah.
19. **Hoshea**, son of Elah.

7. Athaliah,⁵ daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel.
8. Jehoash (Joash),⁵ son of Ahaziah.
9. Amaziah,⁵ son of Jehoash.
10. Uzziah (Azariah), son of Amaziah.
11. Jotham, son of Uzziah, regent and then king.
12. **Ahaz**, son of Jotham.

End of the Northern Kingdom.

⁵ Murdered.

⁶ Perished in flames of palace.

Change of family is indicated by bold-faced type.

(Giving historical periods, books of the Old Testament where history is found, and countries where events happened)

	The Patriarchs	The Exodus and the Wilderness	The Conquest of Palestine	The Judges	The United Kingdom			Israel, or the Northern Kingdom	Exile	Return from Exile
PERIODS	Abraham Isaac Jacob Joseph	Moses Aaron 13th Century B.C.	Joshua	Othniel Ehud Deborah Barak Gideon Jephthah Samson	Saul, of Tribe of Benjamin	David, of Tribe of Judah	Solomon, Son of David	Nineteen Kings Nine Dynasties Samaria the Capital from Omri's time 722 B.C.—End of the Northern Kingdom Judah, or the Southern Kingdom Nineteen Kings One Queen, Athaliah Davidic Dynasty Jerusalem the Capital 587 B.C.—End of the Southern Kingdom	587-538 B.C.	538-432 B.C.
THE SEVENTEEN HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT	1 Genesis	2 Exodus 3 Leviticus 4 Numbers 5 Deuteronomy	6 Joshua	7 Judges 8 Ruth	9 I Samuel	9 I Samuel (David at Court of Saul and in Exile) 10 II Samuel (David as King)	11 I Kings	11 I Kings 12 II Kings 13 I Chronicles 14 II Chronicles	15 Ezra 16 Nehemiah 17 Esther	
COUNTRIES WHERE EVENTS HAPPENED	Babylonia (Abraham from Ur) Palestine Egypt	Egypt and the Wilderness South of Palestine and East of Egypt					Palestine		Babylonia (Exile)	Palestine (Return)

432 B.C. End of Old Testament History

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The Southern Kingdom, 722-587 B.C.

12. Ahaz, son of Jotham.
13. Hezekiah, son of Ahaz.
14. Manasseh, son of Hezekiah.
15. Amon,⁸ son of Manasseh.
16. Josiah,⁷ son of Amon.
17. Jehoahaz⁹ (Shallum), son of Josiah (three months).
18. Jehoiakim (Eliakim), son of Josiah.
19. Jehoiachin¹⁰ (Jechoniah, Coniah), son of Jehoiakim (three months).
20. Zedekiah¹¹ (Mattaniah), son of Josiah.

Note. Questions for review and subjects for further study are omitted from Chapters VII and VIII. These two chapters give a rapid survey of Old Testament history in order that the outstanding events from the time of Abraham to the time of Nehemiah may be in the mind of the reader. Questions covering the various periods will be found in Chapters IX-XVIII.

⁷ Died in battle.

⁸ Murdered.

⁹ Died a prisoner in Egypt.

¹⁰ Taken prisoner to Babylonia but later released.

¹¹ Blinded, died a prisoner in Babylonia.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANCESTORS OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE

In the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis there are a group of narratives telling of the creation of the world and of man; of the disobedience of man and of its consequences; of the origin of arts and crafts; of a destructive flood or deluge; of the repeopling of the earth; and of the rise of different languages. Sublime moral and religious truths are given in a wonderful way. The most important of them are these: a personal God was the Creator of the universe; man was made in the image of God; sin entered into the world through man's choice and because of his disobedience; sin deserves and brings punishment. One who makes a study of the narratives of the Creation and of the Flood in Genesis and compares them with the Babylonian narratives of the Creation and the Flood finds the Bible account dignified in its monotheism, and in its conception of a spiritual Being, while the Babylonian account is polytheistic and at times grotesque. The gods of the pantheon emerge from chaos. The cause of the Flood is not, as in Genesis, a divine judgment upon sin, but is due to the mere caprice of a god.

The Patriarchs, the Ancestors of the Hebrew People. The history of the Hebrew people begins with the migration of the Semite Abraham with Sarah his wife, Lot his nephew, his servants, and his flocks

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and herds, from his home in Babylonia to Palestine — a journey of about one thousand miles from Ur near the Persian Gulf to Hebron, south of Jerusalem. Some years may have elapsed before Palestine was reached. If Hammurabi, of the first dynasty of Babylon (who reigned about 1775–1721 B.C.), is the same as Amraphel, king of Shinar, Gen. 14:1, then Abraham was a contemporary of Hammurabi.

Jacob and Esau were the twin sons of Isaac, Abraham's son, and Rebekah. Esau, the first-born, sold his birthright to Jacob. Later, by craft and falsehood, Jacob secured the blessing of Isaac and was compelled to depart from Beer-sheba. He went to Haran in Mesopotamia to be with his uncle, Laban, brother of Rebekah. At Beth-el north of Jerusalem Jacob had a vision. "In his dream the natural features of the locality" shaped "themselves into a ladder or flight of stone steps, rising up to heaven." Jacob married Leah and Rachel, Laban's daughters, and after twenty years at Haran fled from Laban and returned to Palestine. At Peniel, east of the Jordan River, he wrestled with an angel.

Joseph, Jacob's favorite son, was sent by his father from Hebron to Dothan, sixty-five miles north, on the caravan route from Gilead, west of the Jordan, to Egypt. His brothers, who were jealous of him, sold Joseph to some merchants who were going down to Egypt. Jacob mourned for Joseph, thinking that he had been killed by some wild animal. Joseph was cast into prison in Egypt because of the false accusation of Potiphar's wife. He interpreted the dreams of two fellow prisoners, chief officers of the Pharaoh, and later

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the dreams of the Pharaoh himself. He was made governor or prime minister of Egypt, and determined the policy of the government during the famine. This period, during which Joseph was elevated to a position next to the Pharaoh, is placed by some in the rule of one of the Hyksos kings. These were the rulers of an Asiatic people, probably Semites, who invaded Egypt and ruled from a stronghold on the extreme east of the Delta, close to the borders of Asia, and who were expelled after a rule of about one hundred years, 1680-1580 B.C.¹

There was famine in Canaan, or Palestine, also, and Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy grain. There Joseph received them, made himself known to them, and forgave them. Jacob and his sons migrated to Egypt where they settled in the land of Goshen, in Lower Egypt, a section of excellent pasture land about eighty square miles in area, which had been assigned to them by the Pharaoh as their place of residence. Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and prophesied concerning his own twelve sons. He died in Egypt, and was buried in the cave of Machpelah, at Hebron in Palestine, which Abraham had purchased from Ephron the Hittite, Gen., ch. 23. Joseph died in Egypt; his body was later taken to Palestine and buried at Shechem, Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32.

Significant Moral and Spiritual Values in the Stories of the Patriarchs. There is much material of moral and religious value in the stories of the Patriarchs, and there are three especially interesting charac-

¹ See J. H. Breasted, "A History of Egypt," Chapter 11.

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ters. The first is Abraham with qualities of steadfastness and obedience, faith and generosity, hospitality and courage, but, like other Bible characters apart from the sinless Christ, with imperfections and failures in his life. The second is Jacob — unlike the “ profane ” Esau, “ unfenced and unhallowed ” — with a capacity for higher things. Jacob's experience at Penuel, where he was given a change of name and of moral nature, made him a better man. He was “ no longer ‘ Jacob,’ the ‘ Overreacher,’ the ‘ Supplanter,’ but ‘ Israel,’ the ‘ Perseverer with God,’ who is worthy also to prevail,” who acknowledged at the close of his life that God had shepherded him all his “ life long unto this day,” Gen. 48:15. Joseph, the third man, recognized the fact that impurity is a sin against God as well as against human beings. “ How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? ” he said, Gen. 39:9. Joseph's devotion to his father was praiseworthy. Then, too, he saw God's leading in his life. He knew that whatever ability he had in interpreting dreams belonged to God, Gen. 41:16, and he was certain that God was responsible for his being sold into slavery and also for his elevation to the governorship of Egypt. God's providence had guided the experiences of this family to a happy conclusion. “ And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Gen. 50:20.

The great adventure of faith was made by Abraham as it was made by the Pilgrim fathers in our own American history. There was an underlying religious motive in Abraham's migration: the desire to worship in his

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own way the one true God, and to abandon the polytheism of his ancestors. Compare Josh. 24:2, 14. Thus a divine impulse drove him to seek a new home that he might carry out God's plan that the nation descended from him should become a separate people and should bless the world by giving the knowledge of the true God. "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Gen. 12:1-3. "And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. 18:17-19.

Abraham's faith was tested by the interrupted sacrifice of his son Isaac, and he was taught the great lesson that God does not desire human sacrifice, but rather obedience and supreme devotion. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." Gen. 22:12.

To Abraham God was a God of justice. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18:25. But Jehovah was also a God of mercy; the presence of ten

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righteous men in Sodom could have saved the city. Gen. 18:32.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, is called the "friend" of God, II Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8. "He believed in Jehovah" and Jehovah counted Abraham's trust in his character "to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What are the great truths in the early chapters of Genesis?
2. Read carefully the stories of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. What were the characteristics of each of these men?
3. What was the motive of Abraham's migration to Canaan? What is the significance of the journey?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Read the promises made to Abraham: Gen. 12:2, 3, 7; 13:14-17; ch. 15; 17:1-21; 18:18, 19; 21:12; 22:16-18. Compare Rom. 9:4. Sum up their content.

2. In the Old Testament there are numerous references to the practice of sacrificing human beings both among the Hebrews and among other peoples. The underlying idea was to give to the deity the nearest and dearest. See especially the following references: Gen., ch. 22; Judg. 11:29-40; II Kings 3:27; 16:3; 17:17, 31; 21:6; 23:10; Ps. 106:37, 38; Isa. 57:5; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35; Ezek. 16:20, 21; 20:26; 23:37; Micah 6:7, 8. See also the laws in Ex. 22:29; 34:20; Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10.

3. The birthright was usually enjoyed by the oldest son, who succeeded his father as head of the family and took the largest share of the property. In Deut. 21:17 this was fixed as "a double portion," that is, a share twice as large as that of the other sons.

4. There are records in Egyptian inscriptions of foreigners receiving permission to settle in Egypt. In the time of Menep-tah, thirteenth century B.C., who was probably the Pharaoh of the Exodus, permission was given to certain nomad tribes to

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pasture their flocks and herds near Pithom, a few miles east of Goshen.² Famines in Egypt are due to the Nile's failing to overflow. Ameni, who lived in Egypt in the twentieth century B.C., recorded on his tomb: "When years of famine came, I plowed all the fields of the Oryx-nome, as far as its southern and northern boundary, preserving all its people alive and furnishing its food, so that there was none hungry therein. I gave to the widow as to her who had a husband; I did not exalt the great above the small in all I gave. Then came great Niles, rich in grain and all things, but I did not collect the arrears of the field."³ Baba of El-Kab lived in Egypt about 1500 B.C.⁴ Joseph's wife was the daughter of a priest of On, Gen. 41:45, or Heliopolis, near modern Cairo, Egypt, which was the chief center of the worship of the sun god Ra, and where there was a temple with priests. One of the obelisks of Thothmes III, fifteenth century B.C., which once stood on one side of the approach to the sun temple of On, is now in Central Park, New York City.⁵

4. Note the importance attached to dreams in Egypt and in other ancient countries. From a study of Egyptian history be able to discuss famines, land tenure, granaries, court officials, organization in households, and embalming of the dead.

5. Note the importance in later Old Testament history of the four cities, Shechem, Beth-el, Hebron, and Beer-sheba, mentioned in the story of the Patriarchs. Beer-sheba, meaning "Well of Seven," is fifty miles south of Jerusalem. The Bedouins still bring their flocks and herds to be watered at the wells, which are over four thousand years old. The deep grooves worn in the stone sides by the ropes that for centuries have drawn up jars of water show the great age of the wells. The traditional site of the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, twenty miles south of Jerusalem, is to-day surmounted by a Moslem mosque. At Nablus, the ancient Shechem, thirty miles north of Jerusalem, at the foot of their holy mountain, Gerizim, live a colony of some one hundred and fifty Samaritans, de-

² See "Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges," Ex., Introduction, page 38.

³ J. H. Breasted, "A History of Egypt," page 161.

⁴ See G. A. Barton, "Archæology and the Bible," Fourth Edition, page 332.

⁵ See J. H. Breasted, "A History of Egypt," figure 116, and also page 306.

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scendants of the Samaritans of Bible times. Beth-el, ten miles north of Jerusalem, is in ruins to-day.

6. The Semitic race is chiefly represented by the Jews and the Arabs to-day. In ancient times the Semites (Shemites) included the Babylonians, Assyrians, Arabs, Aramæans (usually translated "Syrians" in the English versions of the Bible), Canaanites, Phœnicians, and Hebrews (Israelites, Edomites or descendants of Edom or Esau, Ammonites, Moabites), but probably not the Philistines. The name "Hebrew" may have meant "one of the other side," referring to the fact that the Hebrews came from east of the Euphrates. An "Israelite" is a descendant of Jacob or Israel. A "Jew" strictly speaking is a person belonging to Judah, but the word was scarcely used until after the fall of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century B.C., and later it became equivalent to "Israelite."

7. For the wealth of the nomad see Gen. 13:2-9; 21:25-30; 24:22, 25, 47, 53; 26:20-22; 32:5; 37:12; Ex. 3:1; 12:32; Judg. 5:16; for the supreme authority of the father see Gen., ch. 22; Ex. 21:7; for marriage see Gen., chs. 24; 29; 31:15; Ruth 4:10. Note the price paid for the wife to her parents, Gen. 24:53, "precious things," and that a generous father gave back to the daughter some part of it, Gen. 31:15. Jacob's services for fourteen years took the place of purchase money, Gen. 29:18. For the story of a business transaction see Gen., ch. 23; for personal characteristics of the nomad, Gen. 13:8; 18:1-8; 44:18-34; 45:1-15; for survivals of nomadic characteristics in later history, Josh. 22:4; II Sam. 20:1; I Kings 12:16. ("To your tents" meant "to your homes.") For significant imagery see Isa. 33:20; 38:12; 54:2; for description of tents, S. of Sol. 1:5; for quarrels, Gen. 13:7; 26:12-22.

CHAPTER X

THE SOJOURN OF THE ISRAELITES IN EGYPT AND THEIR DELIVERANCE THROUGH MOSES. THE COVE- NANT AT SINAI

Centuries after Joseph's time "there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph." This Pharaoh of Egypt did not remember the services of Joseph to the Egyptian Government and, alarmed at the increase of the Israelites by births, he put them to work at making bricks and practically enslaved them. "The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Pharaoh also ordered the destruction of the male Hebrew children, but the child Moses, who was placed in an ark of bulrushes or papyrus in the Nile River, was rescued and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. In his youth he was educated as an Egyptian at the court of the Pharaoh. Moses failed in his first attempt to help his countrymen, Ex. 2:11, 12, when he killed the Egyptian who was "smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren," and fleeing from Egypt, he took refuge in the land of Midian, southeast of Goshen, and near the eastern arm of the Red Sea. God appeared to Moses in the burning bush at Mount Sinai or Horeb, and there Moses was called and commissioned to be the

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leader and deliverer of his oppressed people, the Israelites. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was to be the prophet or spokesman for him. In spite of the plagues, ten severe calamities which came upon Egypt and the Egyptians, the Pharaoh was defiant and increased the burdens of the Hebrews. See Ex., chs. 1-11.

God's providence delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. The first-born of the Egyptians died. The passover became an annual festival to celebrate the wonderful deliverance. Ex. 12:17. The Israelites with their flocks and herds left Egypt hastily. They were able to cross the Red Sea, probably at the northern end of the western arm, the Gulf of Suez. "Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." Ex. 14:21. The army which the Pharaoh sent to pursue the Israelites was destroyed. The Israelites, with Joshua as their leader, were victorious in a conflict with nomadic Amalekites. Jethro visited Moses, his son-in-law, and counseled him in the administration of justice. See Ex. 12:1-19:2.

The Israelites received the law at Mount Sinai and ratified a solemn covenant or sacred compact with Jehovah by the sprinkling of blood upon themselves and upon the altar and by consenting to obey the terms of the covenant. This blood covenant, Ex., ch. 24, was the most solemn form of agreement known to the Semitic peoples. Later Aaron violated the covenant with Jehovah by making for the Israelites a golden calf; but after the intercession of Moses the covenant was renewed. The devotion of Moses to his people is shown

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by his forgetfulness of self: "And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin — ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Ex. 32:31, 32. See Ex., chs. 19:3–40:38.

From Kadesh-barnea, an oasis with a good water supply one hundred miles south of Jerusalem, the headquarters in the wilderness of the Israelites for the greater part of the forty years' life in the peninsula of Sinai, spies were sent to obtain information about Canaan or Palestine and its people. The report of the majority proved discouraging. A new generation grew up, born in the wilderness, hardier than that which had left Egypt. After their long sojourn the Israelites advanced to Canaan. The king of Edom refused to let them pass through his territory and they were compelled to go around the land of Edom. The Israelites were successful over the Amorite kings: Sihon, whose kingdom was between the Arnon and Jabbok rivers, east of the Jordan; and Og, king of Bashan, which was north of the Jabbok. Balaam, a famous soothsayer from the East, was brought by Balak, king of Moab, to place a curse upon the Israelites, but he predicted the future greatness of Israel. Moses appointed Joshua the Ephraimite as his successor, and died on Mount Nebo, a peak in the mountain range of Pisgah, in the land of Moab, east of the Jordan. Here he viewed the Promised Land which he was not permitted to enter. "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Deut. 34:6. See the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy.

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Significant Moral and Spiritual Values. The Exodus from Egypt under Moses, the great leader, is one of the outstanding events in Hebrew history and is often referred to in the Old Testament, Judg. 19:30; I Sam. 8:8; II Sam. 7:6; Hos. 12:9; 13:4; and elsewhere. It was thought of as the birthday of the Hebrew nation, the beginning of the national life. The people who had been oppressed were united in spirit as they experienced the wonderful deliverance in crossing the Red Sea and as they marched from Egypt into the wilderness.

"I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. . . .
Jehovah is a man of war:
Jehovah is his name. . . .
Who is like unto thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . .
Thou in thy lovingkindness hast led the people that thou
hast redeemed:
Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation." Ex. 15:1, 3, 11, 13.

Jehovah had shown his kindness and compassion to Israel by freeing them from Egyptian slavery; and he had displayed his power by the succession of plagues or extraordinary national calamities that had afflicted the Egyptians and by the defeat of the pursuing Egyptian army that had been sent by the Pharaoh to overtake the Israelites. It was the duty of the people of Israel to show their gratefulness to Jehovah by keeping the covenant established between them and him. Jehovah had first chosen Israel, not of necessity, but of free will, and the people had chosen him, accepting him voluntarily as their God. "You only have I known of all

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the families of the earth." Amos 3:2. The relationship which existed between the Israelites and their God was a peculiar bond, not the kind of relationship that was present in the minds of the worshipers of other gods at that time. Chemosh, according to the thought of the Moabites, was their god by necessity, probably because of supposed descent from the god. There had been no choice in the matter, but the tie was believed to be indissoluble. Chemosh would take the part of the Moabites as a matter of course; ethical considerations were not necessarily regarded.

The choice on both sides was expressed by a covenant between Jehovah and Israel, a sacred contract ratified in a solemn manner. In making the covenant the Israelites promised to be loyal to Jehovah, who had chosen Israel as his nation, to worship and serve him exclusively, and to observe the moral and religious demands of the law. Jehovah promised to fulfill his promises made to the Israelites and to their ancestors, to be their God, to protect, to care for, and to prosper Israel. If the Israelites would fulfill their part of the sacred agreement Jehovah would fulfill his. "And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." Ex. 24: 6, 7. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is

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mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Ex. 19:4-6. The Israelites could trust the promises of Jehovah as they looked toward the future.

"It is clear that from the very first there was a far-reaching difference between the national religion of Israel and other national religions. . . . It was not Israel that first chose Jahweh, but Jahweh that chose Israel. Their mutual relation does not therefore rest upon blood relationship, but upon the free determination of a mighty God. This determination, however, was no arbitrary one; it sprang from the fundamental attributes of this God, namely righteousness and mercy. He saw the misery of the people as they pined under cruel and yet wholly undeserved oppression, and was filled with compassion for them; he determined to deliver them, and with a strong hand he carried his purpose to a victorious issue. Righteousness and mercy are essentially moral qualities. If they were the motive for the choice and the deliverance of Israel, the religion derived from them bore from the first an ethical stamp in quite a different sense from anything that had ever been conceivable in a purely national religion. It was self-evident that the God who in his very choice and deliverance of Israel had exhibited moral attributes, would require from the people the same qualities on which his relation to them was based." The power of God, exhibited in the way in which he fulfilled his promise and put to rout the Egyptian army, "is not thought of as mere brute force arbitrarily exercised, but once more as serving moral ends. In this lies the pledge of its final triumph over

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all unrighteousness and impiety, whether within or outside the people of Israel.”¹

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What is the significance of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt?
2. What were the conditions of the covenant made between Jehovah and Israel? What is the significance of the fact that Jehovah first chose Israel, and that his power served moral ends? What influence did this fact have upon the ideas of the prophets of the eighth century B.C. and after?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. From a study of the Old Testament narratives determine what ideas of God were held by Moses.
2. Moses laid the foundation for the Hebrew nation and for its religion. Make a study of him, finding the passages which tell of him as leader, organizer, liberator, lawgiver, judge, priest, prophet. How did his training at the Egyptian court and in the wilderness prepare him for his great work? What was the significance of his work?
3. Study the covenant among the Semites.
4. What is the relation between the passover and the Lord's Supper?
5. Look up references in the Old Testament to forced labor or *corvée*. It was a well-known institution in ancient times. If an Oriental monarch had stone to be quarried, fortifications to be constructed, a temple or palace to be built, a gigantic statue to be hauled to its place, or canals to be dug or repaired, the work was carried on by gangs of men, laboring compulsorily under overseers. Criminals and prisoners of war were generally employed in this way, though native peasants were not exempt. Solomon made use of the *corvée* for constructing his buildings. That it was unpopular is shown by the fact that Adoniram, the superintendent of the *corvée* under Solomon, was stoned to

¹ Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible," extra volume, article on "Religion of Israel," page 632.

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death by the people, see Ex. 1:11; II Sam. 20:24; I Kings 4:6; 5:13; 9:15; 11:28; 12:18; and Cambridge Bible, Exodus, page 3.

6. Moses was of the house of Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi. He married Zipporah, daughter of Jethro or Reuel, a priest of Midian and a Kenite. See Ex., ch. 18; Num. 10: 29, 30; Judg. 1:16; 4:11. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was three years older, and Miriam, his sister, about fifteen years older, than Moses. Look up the relationship of the Kenites to the Israelites. How did Jethro help Moses in the plan of administering justice? What was the character of Miriam? of Aaron?

7. For the plagues, read Psalms 78 and 105. The plagues or calamities which befell the Egyptians and showed the power of Jehovah and his care for the Israelites were ten in number, and probably took place during a period lasting from about August of one year to April of the next, the seventh plague occurring in January, Ex. 9:31, 32, and the tenth at the time of our Easter. The majority of the plagues are possible in Egypt. The extraordinary element was in their severity; in the short space of time, less than a year, in which all ten took place; and in their affecting only the Egyptians and leading to the deliverance of the Hebrews. The ten plagues in order were: the plague of the blood or the defilement of the Nile River; the plague of frogs; the plague of gnats or mosquitoes (lice); the plague of flies; the plague of murrain, a cattle disease; the plague of boils; the plague of hail; the plague of locusts; the plague of darkness; and the plague causing the death of the first-born of the Egyptians, probably a malignant epidemic or pestilence. Note that the decomposition of frogs, Ex. 8:14, would breed flies and mosquitoes and that these in turn would carry disease germs to cattle and men.

8. Note the names for God in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). The name "Jehovah," or "Jahweh," which is the name in Hebrew, was the personal name of the God of Israel. The name was, for the Israelite, the most holy of the divine names, and suggested that Jehovah would be to his people more than words could express and that time and the events of history would gradually unfold his true nature. "He will be to Moses and his people, what he will be." See Ex. 3:14, 15; 6:3. In Old Testament names the shortened forms "jo" and "jeho" were used at the beginning and "jah" and "jahu" at the end. Hence Jonathan and Jehonathan are the

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same names, and Joram and Jehoram, and Joash and Jehoash, meaning respectively, "Jehovah has given," "Jehovah is exalted," "Jehovah is strong." For Jehovah at the end of names, note the name Isaiah, "Jehovah hath saved," the "iah" for "jahu." "Hallelu-jah" means "Praise ye Jehovah."

CHAPTER XI

THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND OF PROMISE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEBREW MONARCHY UNDER SAUL

Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River into western Palestine, and the hill country was conquered and settled. Intermarriage with the Canaanites took place in some communities, and in some cases treaties were made. In other places the Canaanites were put to death. That the conquest was incomplete at this time is shown by the fact that Canaanite cities extended across the plain of Esdraelon to the Jordan, dividing the northern tribes from the central tribes. In the northern part of Palestine the genuine Israelite population was small, hence the name "Galilee [the district] of the nations," Isa. 9:1. A chain of Canaanite settlements also separated the southern tribes, Judah and Simeon, from the central or Rachel tribes, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Jerusalem was occupied by the Jebusites, a tribe of the Canaanites, but was later taken by David. The Philistines and Phœnicians held a broad strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea. Ephraim and Manasseh, the strongest tribes at this time, settled the mountainous ridge in central Palestine. The tribes of Gad and Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh settled east of the Jordan. See The Book of Joshua; also Judg. 1:1 to 2:5.

The period of the Judges followed. They were de-

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liverers and military and civil leaders, some of whom were evidently contemporaneous. There was no central authority, no organized society; "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," Judg. 17:6; 21:25. In the history of the Judges, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, "we have the same succession of apostasy, subjugation, the cry for help, deliverance, described often in the same, always in similar phraseology."¹

The narratives in The Book of Judges show that the Hebrew tribes were partly disunited at that time. Four tribes refused to aid Deborah and Barak, and two tribes, Judah and Simeon, are not mentioned in Deborah's Song, Judg., ch. 5. The towns, Meroz, Penuel, and Succoth refused to help the Israelites. Ephraim was jealous of Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, and of Jephthah, from Gilead east of the Jordan. The men of Judah were ready to bind Samson, of Dan, and to deliver him into the hands of the Philistines.

Various enemies oppressed the Israelites, and Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, and others withstood their attacks and delivered the Hebrews. The power of the Canaanites was permanently broken by the six Hebrew tribes united under Deborah and Barak. A storm flooded the plain of Esdraelon, and the Canaanite chariots proved useless. The chief enemy still unconquered was the Philistine nation — an aggressive, warlike people who lived on the maritime plain of Palestine, and at this time held a large part of central Palestine, with the Israelites as vassals paying tribute. A strong leader

¹ S. R. Driver, "An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," page 164.

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was needed to unite the disorganized Hebrew tribes, to put an end to the Philistine menace, and to establish permanent security.

Samuel, a prophet or seer of Ramah in Ephraim, in obedience to a divine command, anointed Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, who was called to deliver Israel from the Philistines and to establish the monarchy: "Thou shalt anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he shall save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me," I Sam. 9:16. The occasion spoken of by Samuel, I Sam. 10:7, came soon, and Saul delivered Jabesh-gilead, an Israelite city east of the Jordan, from the Ammonites. The enthusiasm of the people was aroused and they made Saul king. He was attractive and tall; "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people."

Saul lost Samuel's friendship and support, and after that time was subject to anger and deep melancholy and was in a morbid mental condition. Saul seems to have been unable to coöperate with the wandering bands of prophets, intensely patriotic religious enthusiasts, who wished to shake off the yoke of the national foe, the Philistines. These prophets made music with psaltery, timbrel, pipe, and harp, thus exciting themselves to ecstasy. I Sam. 10:5; II Kings 3:15. For Saul's disobedience and rejection, see I Sam. 13:7-15; ch. 15.

The Hebrews under Saul and his son Jonathan were victorious over the Philistines, but the defeat of the enemy was temporary, and at the close of Saul's reign the Philistines invaded the territory of the Israelites,

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probably desiring control of the plain of Esdraelon which was on the caravan route to Damascus and the countries of the East. A battle was fought on Mount Gilboa, at the eastern end of the plain, more than sixty miles away from the Philistine country, which was on the coast. The Israelite army was defeated, and Saul and his three eldest sons, one of whom was Jonathan, died in battle.² The men of Jabesh-gilead, to repay the debt they owed Saul, took the bodies of the slain king and his sons from the wall of Beth-shean, a city a little south of the Lake of Galilee, where the Philistines had placed them, and gave them proper burial.

Saul prepared the way for his successor, David. He "must have reunited to the rest of Israel the tribe of Judah, which all through the period of the Judges had been more or less severed from its fellow tribes: for not only did his rule embrace Bethlehem, the home of David, I Sam. 16:19, but the campaign against the Amalekites, I Sam. 14:48, was manifestly intended to protect the southern frontier of Judah. . . . His authority was so firmly secured over Gilead that Mahanaim became the refuge and capital of his son Eshbaal (Ishbosheth), II Sam. 2:8.³

Significant Moral and Spiritual Values. When the Hebrew tribes entered Palestine and settled on both sides of the Jordan River, they found Canaanite shrines everywhere and the worship of the Canaanite Baals,

² The account in I Sam., chs. 28-31 should be read with the following rearrangement of chapters: I Sam., 28:1, 2; chs. 29; 30; 28:3-25; 31. See commentaries.

³ G. A. Wade, "Old Testament History," page 237.

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"rustic divinities," being carried on. The Canaanites believed that these gods gave the agricultural products, "the grain, and the new wine, and the oil," Hos. 2:8. The Canaanite worship, accompanied as it was by degrading, immoral practices, was alluring to some of the Israelites, who worshiped the local Baals or combined the worship of Jehovah with the worship of the Canaanite deities. But the Israelites had to choose between Jehovah and the other gods, as later, in the time of Elijah and Ahab, ruler of the Northern Kingdom, they had to choose between Jehovah and Phœnician Baalism. "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah." Josh. 24:14, 15.

In "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," Dr. G. A. Smith compares and contrasts the history of Israel with the history of the Philistines: "Both Philistines and Hebrews were immigrants into the land for whose possession they fought through centuries. Both absorbed the populations they found upon it. Both succeeded to the Canaanite civilization, and came under the fascination of the Canaanite religion. . . . Yet Israel survived and the Philistine disappeared. Israel attained to a destiny, equaled in the history of mankind only by Greece and Rome, whereas all the fame of the Philistine lies in having served as a foil to

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the genius of the Hebrews, and to-day his name against theirs is the symbol of impenetrableness and obscurantism. . . . It was not Israel's geographical position which prevented her from yielding to the Canaanite religion, or moved her, being still young and rude, to banish from her midst the soothsayers and necromancers, to whom the Philistines were wholly given over. But from the first Israel had within her a spirit, and before her an ideal, of which the Philistines knew nothing, and always her prophets identified the purpose — which they plainly recognized — of her establishment on so isolated and secure a position with the highest ends of righteousness, wisdom, and service to all mankind." ⁴

In the conquest and settlement of Canaan, or the Promised Land, as in the Exodus from Egypt, Jehovah's power was manifested. This again was a proof of his faithfulness to his people, for he enabled them to defeat their enemies and to take possession of their inheritance. His enemies were the enemies of Israel. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah." Judg. 5:31. The battles fought were the battles of Jehovah. Deborah called the Israelites to battle in the name of Jehovah of Sinai. The citizens of Meroz who failed to come to the aid of Deborah "came not to the help of Jehovah," Judg. 5:23. Gideon's little band of three hundred went forth to victory as they gave the battle cry, "The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon," Judg. 7:20. Saul asked David to "fight Jehovah's battles," I Sam. 18:17; and Abigail believed that David was

⁴ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," pages 175-177.

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fighting Jehovah's battles, I Sam. 25:28. A source used in the writing of the Pentateuch has for its title, "The Book of the Wars of Jehovah," which is referred to in Num. 21:14.

With the establishment of the monarchy under Saul there came a wonderful growth of national self-consciousness. The way was made clear for David to wage successful warfare against all the enemies of Israel, and to establish firmly the United Kingdom. What this meant to the religion of the Hebrews will be seen in the consideration of David's reign and that of his son Solomon.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was the work of Joshua? his character? the extent of the conquest in his time?
2. What are the general characteristics of the period of the Judges? What was the character of Gideon? of Jephthah? of Samson?
3. How did the conquest of Palestine show the power and faithfulness of Jehovah?
4. What external and internal conditions led to the institution of the Hebrew monarchy?
5. What was the nature of the prophetic guilds of Saul's time?
6. What were the results of Saul's reign?
7. What was the character of Samuel? of Saul? of Jonathan?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What do we learn from The First Book of Samuel as to religion in the time of Samuel and Saul?
2. What is the prophetic teaching of I Sam. 15:22? See also Psalms 15; 24; 50:8-15; 51:17; Isa. 1: 1-17; Jer. 7:22; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21-27; Micah 6:8; Matt. 9:13.
3. Discuss the position of Jericho in the story of the conquest

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of Palestine. The natural approach to Mount Ephraim and the north and to the country south of Jerusalem was from Jericho. The "weakness of Jericho was due to two causes. An open pass came down on her from northern Israel, and from this both part of her water supply could be cut off and the hills behind her could be occupied. But besides this, her people seem never to have been distinguished for bravery; and, indeed, in that climate, how could they? Enervated by the great heat, . . . it was impossible they could be warriors, or anything but irrigators, paddlers in water and soft earth. . . . She has been called 'the key' and 'the guardhouse' of Judea; she was only the pantry. She never stood a siege, and her inhabitants were always running away."⁵ For the resistance of Canaanite inhabitants of Jericho, see Josh. 24:11.

4. Note that the term "Baal," meaning "lord" or "possessor," was a title applied to Jehovah before Hosea's time, eighth century B.C., Hos. 2:16, but it came to be associated in a specific way with heathen worship as opposed to the worship of Jehovah. Gideon was also called Jerubbaal; Saul named one of his sons Eshbaal, "man of Baal" (later his name was changed to Ishbosheth, "man of shame"); and David named one of his sons Beeliada, "Baal hath known" (also called Eliada).

5. For the first attempt to found an hereditary monarchy in Israel, read the story of Abimelech, son of Gideon, who reigned as king of Shechem three years, Judg., ch. 9; cf. ch. 8:22, 23.

6. Jephthah, probably in fulfillment of his vow, sacrificed his daughter, his only child. Judg., ch. 11; cf. I Sam. 14:39, 44; Gen., ch. 22. What is a vow? Should Jephthah have broken his vow?

7. The Hebrew word "shibboleth," given by Jephthah as a test to distinguish his men from the men of Ephraim, Judg. 12:4-6, means in the English language a test word or watchword.

8. The Ark of the Covenant, I Sam. 4:3, so called because it contained the two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments, the basis of the covenant between Jehovah and Israel, symbolized the presence of Jehovah. It was an oblong chest about four feet long by a little over two feet deep and wide. The mercy seat or propitiatory was a slab of gold placed on top of the Ark. On it and part of it were two golden

⁵ G. A. Smith, "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," page 268.

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cherubim facing each other, whose outstretched wings came together. Solomon placed the Ark in the Temple at Jerusalem, and it was probably taken by the Babylonians at the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. See Jer. 3:16. There was no Ark in the Jerusalem Temple after the return from exile.

CHAPTER XII

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF DAVID

After the estrangement between Samuel and Saul, David, the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem in the country of Judah, was anointed by Samuel, who declared him to be the choice of Jehovah and said that he was to be king after Saul's death. David was brought to Saul's court at Gibeah, eight miles north of Bethlehem, as a player of the harp, and he became Saul's armor-bearer. He killed the Philistine giant, and was given Saul's daughter Michal in marriage. David ranked next to Abner, Saul's general. In the army he was made captain over a thousand. Saul became jealous of David's popularity, and of his influence over his son Jonathan, the heir apparent, who was loyal to his friend David. When the women came out to meet the returning warriors, and "sang one to another as they played, and said,

Saul hath slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands

. . . Saul was very wroth, and this saying displeased him." David was compelled to flee from Saul's court and to live as an exile in the south of Judah, where he became captain of four hundred men, and later of six hundred men, who joined themselves to him at the stronghold of Adullam, southwest of Bethlehem. Later when the defenseless Saul was in David's power, David

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spared his life. By his marriage with Abigail David came into rich possessions and he allied himself with the influential clan of Caleb in his own tribe of Judah.

To show his gratitude to those who had been friendly and to secure their support for the day when he should attempt to succeed to the throne, David distributed the booty taken in raids to the influential men in Judah, the tribal chiefs. These presents were probably sent after Saul's death. II Sam. 1:1; I Sam. 30:26-31. He sent a message of thanks to the men of Jabesh-gilead, in which he expressed appreciation for their pious act, and desire for the loyal support of the men of Gilead.

At Hebron David was anointed king over the tribe of Judah. At this time there was civil war between Judah and the north. Abner, Saul's cousin or uncle, had set up Saul's son, Ish-bosheth or Eshbaal, as a rival king, and a kingdom was established with its capital east of the Jordan. This kingdom included Ephraim, Benjamin, and some of the tribes of the north and east. Later, with the desertion of Abner, Eshbaal lost his chief supporter; the kingdom fell, and Eshbaal was murdered by two of his captains.

Northern Israel now submitted to David, and he was made king over all Israel by a national assembly. The Philistines, who considered David a vassal, just as they had considered Eshbaal, did not consent to this arrangement and invaded the country, II Sam. 5:17, 18; but they were defeated, and their domination over the country came to an end. From the time of David the power of the Philistines, "and indeed their very individuality, dwindled away with a rapidity difficult to

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parallel. The contrast between the pre-Davidic and the post-Davidic Philistines is one of the most extraordinary in human history.”¹

All the other enemies of the Israelites were subdued by David. “Jehovah gave victory to David whithersoever he went,” and David greatly extended his territory and unified his kingdom. Especially important is his treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre, in Phœnicia. As a result of his inheritance and of his military conquests the United Kingdom extended from the Red Sea on the south to the Lebanon Mountains and Damascus on the north, and from the Mediterranean Sea on the west, not including Philistia, to the desert on the east. David built up a centralized government by his organization. The main officials besides the priests were the general in chief of the army, a scribe or secretary of state, a recorder or state historian, an overseer of forced labor, a counselor, a “friend” with some position of influence, II Sam. 15:37, and an officer over the body-guard of six hundred mercenary soldiers, who were at this time chiefly Philistines. There were also David’s heroes or mighty men composing two orders of knight-hood: the order of the three and the order of the thirty. The enlargement of David’s harem indicated an increase of wealth and power. To the influences of the harem, however, some of the troubles of the latter part of his reign are traceable.

¹ R. A. S. Macalister, “The Philistines; Their History and Civilization,” page 61.

Read II Sam., chs. 5; 6, with the following rearrangement of verses: II Sam. 5:1-3, 17-25, 4, 5; 6:1; 5:6-12; 6:2-5. The stronghold of II Sam. 5:9 is Zion, the east hill of Jerusalem; the stronghold of Adullam, southwest of Bethlehem; cf. II Sam. 23:13-17; 5:17.

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David's choice of Jerusalem as his capital was of the greatest significance in the development and growth of the Hebrew religion. In this selection his statesmanship and genius were displayed. This Canaanitish stronghold, situated on a hill and naturally protected on all sides but the north by deep ravines, was captured by David, and was established as the political capital and religious center of the Israelites. Additional fortifications were constructed, and, with the aid of Phœnician workmen, a palace was built. The Ark of the Covenant was brought with great rejoicing to Jerusalem from Kiriath-jearim, seven miles northwest of the city, where it had been since the days of Samuel, and was installed in a tent in Jerusalem. See Psalms 132; 24:7-10. The latter psalm celebrated the entrance of the Ark into Jerusalem.

"As king of all Israel, David could not remain in Hebron. This town lay too far south, and its site possesses little strength. On the other hand, to have chosen one of the fortresses of Ephraim, or even to have settled in Shechem, the natural center of the country, would have aroused the jealousy of his own southern clans. His capital had to lie between the two; most fitly between Bethlehem and Beth-el. But upon this stretch of country there was no position to compare with Jerusalem. . . . To the prime necessities of great strength and a tolerable water supply, to the further advantages of a position on the trunk road, and not far from the head of an easily defended pass into the western plain, Jerusalem added the supreme excellence of a neutral site which had belonged neither to Judah nor to the northern tribes. . . . David's conquest gave

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him complete power over Jerusalem. No tribe or family, except his own, had henceforth predominant rights in the city. . . . There were no Israelite institutions to supplant, nor authorities to conciliate. As the citadel became David's burgh, so the town belonged to the king or his house. In no other town in Israel was the government so directly royal. . . . To such a capital David brought the symbol of his people's God. . . . The national unity had never been maintained, or when lost had never been recovered, except by loyalty to the nation's one God and Lord. His Ark implied himself. It was his Presence which sealed the new-formed union, and consecrated the capital. . . . In giving Israel Jerusalem he gave them the possibility of that which was yet to be. The work was divine and required the ages for its fulfillment."²

David reigned in Hebron as tribal king of Judah a little over seven years, and in Jerusalem as king over all Israel thirty-three years, and "executed justice and righteousness unto all his people," II Sam. 8:15. The Davidic dynasty was on the throne of Judah from about 1011 B.C. until the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. "David was remembered as a just and patriotic ruler; and when oppression and injustice became only too common in Israel, the great prophets looked forward to a time when again a righteous king should sit on his throne; and the name of David became a symbol of the ideal ruler of his line, who they believed must come, and who was afterwards termed the Messiah."³

² G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pages 33-35, 38, 39.

³ Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible," article on "David," page 573.

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"David, . . . as popular hero, even in outlawry and forced exile showed his essential nobility and magnanimity of character, and in his succession to royalty not only established a capital and religious center but built himself into men's hearts in a love which condoned his faults." ⁴

Jehovah was the God of the Israelites, and their home after the conquest of Canaan was in Palestine, which was thought of as Jehovah's domain. To be outside of Palestine they thought, to be away from Jehovah. David when pursued by Saul felt that he had been driven away from Jehovah's presence. "They have driven me out this day that I should not cleave unto the inheritance of Jehovah, saying, Go, serve other gods. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of Jehovah." I Sam. 26:19, 20. Compare Ruth 1:15; II Kings 5:17.

Jehovah was the central fact in David's life. He had a great trust in and reverence for Jehovah. He would not harm Saul because Saul was Jehovah's anointed. At the time of Absalom's rebellion David refused to take with him on his flight the sacred Ark of the Covenant. The fleeing priests brought the Ark from the city, but David commanded Zadok to carry it back, saying, "If I shall find favor in the eyes of Jehovah, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation: but if he say thus, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him," II Sam. 15:25, 26. When Nathan rebuked David for the murder of Uriah and for taking

⁴ J. F. Genung, "A Guidebook to the Biblical Literature," page 80.

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Uriah's wife, Bath-sheba, David confessed his sin, saying, "I have sinned against Jehovah," II Sam. 12:13, and he showed genuine sorrow and penitence. His faith in the mercy of Jehovah is shown by his words, "Let us fall now into the hand of Jehovah; for his mercies are great," II Sam. 24:14. The national recognition given to the religion of Jehovah by David when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem and honored the God of Israel in a public manner meant much to the growth of the Hebrew religion.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What training for kingship did David receive from his boyhood days? his life at Saul's court? his experiences as a fugitive from Saul?
2. What influences made David king over all Israel?
3. What was the extent of the United Kingdom in David's reign? Who were the main officials?
4. What is the significance of the choice of Jerusalem as the national capital and religious center? Why did it make an excellent capital?
5. How did David show his devotion to Jehovah? Why did the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem mean much to the growth of the Hebrew religion?
6. What is the character of David? his place in Hebrew history?
7. What was the character of Abner? Absalom? Joab?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Note that The Book of Ruth traces David's descent from the Israelite Boaz and the Moabitess Ruth. See also I Sam. 22:3, 4; Deut. 23:3.
2. David was anointed by Samuel. This was a method of consecration, a solemn setting apart to an office by the use of oil poured on the head. The name "Christ" is the Greek

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equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah," "the anointed one." Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. Compare I Sam. 24:6; II Sam. 19:21; Isa. 45:1 (Cyrus of the Persian Empire).

3. For events in David's family life, see II Sam., chs. 9-20; I Kings, chs. 1; 2. II Samuel, chs. 21-24, contains an appendix of prose and poetry. Note the beautiful picture of the mother love of Rizpah, II Sam. 21:1-14. The rebellion of the Benjamite, Sheba, following Absalom's rebellion, indicates jealousy between the northern tribes and David's own tribe, Judah.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON

During the last days of David the question of his successor to the throne arose. In his old age David named Solomon, his son by Bath-sheba, as his successor; and the choice of Solomon was favored by Nathan the prophet, Bath-sheba, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, the captain of the bodyguard. Joab, general of David's army, and Abiathar the priest favored Adonijah, the oldest surviving son of David. Solomon was anointed king; Adonijah and Joab were later put to death; Abiathar was removed from the priesthood and banished from Jerusalem; and Zadok was given his place as chief priest. Shimei, of Benjamin, was put to death.

Solomon added to David's court officials another scribe or secretary; a steward or officer of the household; a minister of finance, chief of the provincial governors; and a large number of minor officials of the court and household. Twelve districts, nine west and three east of the Jordan River, were responsible for the maintenance of the royal household, each district furnishing food for the royal tables for one month. Tribal boundaries were disregarded to a certain extent in the division of the country, and Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron, seats of Solomon's family, were not included. Taxation was oppressive. I Kings 12:4. So great was the expenditure in Solomon's reign that he was com-

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pelled to offer to Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty cities of a district in Galilee to repay a loan made by Tyre. Jeroboam, in charge of the forced labor of the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, knew the popular grievances and dissatisfaction and rebelled against Solomon's policy, being supported by Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim. The uprising was suppressed by force and Jeroboam fled to Egypt. He returned after Solomon's death and became the first king of the Northern Kingdom. Solomon was largely responsible for the division of the United Kingdom at his death.

The fortifications of Jerusalem were strengthened, and store cities and garrison towns for cavalry and chariots were established as well as fortified towns at strategic points on the frontiers of Solomon's territory. These commanded important lines of traffic so that the kingdom was adequately protected. The payment of a customs tax was required of merchants and caravans bringing goods into Palestine, and the payment of tolls was required of all those who passed through.¹

Sea trade was developed with a port on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and Phœnician sailors were placed in charge of the fleet. "Once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." There must have been trading trips to Arabia, and even to India.

The reign of Solomon was peaceful, but he lost a small part of David's kingdom. Hadad, of Edom, was the leader of a revolt, and Rezon established at Damas-

¹ See G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. I, page 343; Vol. II, pages 55, 56.

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cus a new kingdom — the Syrian or Aramæan Kingdom which was to make much trouble for the Northern Kingdom in the time of Elijah and Elisha.

In Solomon's reign there was an increase of population in Jerusalem, and there was great material development. Especially characteristic of Solomon was his love of splendor, luxury, and magnificence. His provision for one day for his court was extensive: three hundred and thirty bushels of fine flour, six hundred and sixty bushels of meal, thirty oxen, one hundred sheep, "besides harts, and gazelles, and roebucks, and fatted fowl." Great changes had taken place in Israel's life since the days of simplicity in Saul's reign. The first king of Israel sat in his native Gibeah, "under the tamarisk-tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants," officials chosen from his own tribe of Benjamin, "standing about him." I Sam. 22:6. Solomon, on the other hand, when acting as a judge, sat on his throne of gold and ivory in the hall of justice. I Kings 10:18-20. The gift of Jesse, David's father, to Saul consisted of bread, a skin of wine, and a kid, I Sam. 16:20; the gift of the queen of Sheba to Solomon was, "spices, and very much gold, and precious stones," I Kings 10:2.

Solomon found Jerusalem "little but a fortress, and he left her a city." With the aid of skilled Phœnician workmen many buildings were constructed by the Israelites and by others living in Palestine. The Temple, copied after a foreign model, was one of a group of buildings, and took seven years to complete. The other buildings were: the king's house, lying next to the Temple and south of it, at a lower level, which took

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thirteen years to complete; the house of the daughter of Pharaoh, the palace of the favorite queen; the throne porch or hall of justice, with the throne of ivory and gold; the porch of pillars, a vestibule or waiting room to the hall of justice; and the house of the forest of Lebanon with forty-five cedar pillars arranged in three rows. On these pillars rested the upper story; the first story was used as an armory, and the upper floor probably for general gatherings. This was the largest of the buildings. All the buildings were surrounded by a wall made of great stones.

The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, purchased by David, was the site of Solomon's Temple, tenth century B.C.; of Zerubbabel's Temple, sixth century B.C.; and of the Temple of Herod the Great, a restoration of Zerubbabel's Temple, begun in 19 B.C. and destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. To-day the site is occupied by the Dome of the Rock, sometimes called the Mosque of Omar.

The Temple was a rectangular building, made of white limestone and cedar beams, its greatest length running east and west, being about one hundred and twenty-four feet long by fifty-five broad by fifty-two high. There was a porch or entrance hall on the east side, and there were side chambers on the other three sides. Two bronze pillars or columns, called Jachin and Boaz, were placed, one on the right side of the porch and the other on the left. The interior of the Temple was divided by a wall into two rooms: the outer room, about seventy by thirty-five feet, was called the Holy Place, and the inner room, a cube of thirty-five feet, the "most holy place" or "holy of

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holics." The Temple was not a building for the worshipers. Only the priests entered; the worshipers assembled in the court outside. The inner room contained the Ark of the Covenant; the outer room, the table of shewbread, the lamp stands or candlesticks, and an incense altar.

The timber, cedar, was brought from Lebanon, being taken to a Phœnician port and from there by raft to Joppa, where the cedars were landed and taken overland to Jerusalem. The building stone, limestone rock, was quarried in the hill country of Palestine.

The altar of burnt offering was placed outdoors, just east of the Temple. Near the altar was the bronze sea, a large circular basin, some seventeen feet in diameter, supported by twelve bronze oxen, facing by threes toward the four points of the compass. With the sea or basin in the Temple court were stands on wheels upon which were set basins to convey water from the sea to the great altar.

Solomon, by building this Temple with its great beauty and splendor, increased the prestige of Jerusalem as the religious center of the United Kingdom; the centralization of the national worship at Jerusalem began to be a reality. In the Holy of Holies, the inner room of the Temple, was placed the sacred Ark of the Covenant, rich with associations and significance, and the imageless worship of Jehovah was established. The Jerusalem Temple in time surpassed all other sanctuaries in Palestine; it continually grew in influence and finally became the only sanctuary of the country. "The Temple, not only because it was more imposing than any other in the land, and was identified

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with the one enduring dynasty of the nation, but because it preserved the shrine of ancient Israel, and a purer form of the worship of God than elsewhere prevailed, could wait for that future which lay beyond the calamities that were immediately to assail it.”²

A large harem of foreign wives was maintained by Solomon, and shrines were built in the neighborhood of Jerusalem for the gods of the heathen women. These sanctuaries were destroyed some three hundred years later, in 621 B.C., by Josiah, king of Judah, when he carried out his great work of reformation and centralization of worship. II Kings 23:13. Alliances were made with many surrounding countries by additions to the harem. This meant the introduction of foreign cults and foreign gods, and the effect upon the people was evil, for it meant a recognition of foreign deities and the approval of idolatrous rites and practices, many of them impure and debasing. “Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the mount that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon. And so did he for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.” I Kings 11:7, 8. “This was the inevitable consequence, according to the ideas of the time, of the king’s treaties with monarchs of other faiths, his marriages with their daughters, and his trade with their merchants! It implies, of course, not only a conception of religion still below a perfect monotheism, but an evil effect upon the man whom his policy forced to it. The king, however exclusively he had dedicated the Temple to the God of Israel, could

² G. A. Smith, “Jerusalem,” Vol. II, page 80.

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not live with so many wives nor provide for so many alien forms of worship without himself deteriorating in character and without tempting his people to that confusion of their own higher worship with the other cults of Canaan which was of constant peril to Israel, especially dangerous at a time when the ancient Canaanite communities were being absorbed into the nation.”³

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was Solomon's method of taxation? Why was taxation oppressive?
2. Contrast Solomon's reign with that of Saul.
3. Discuss the building enterprises of Solomon.
4. How was the prestige of Jerusalem increased by Solomon?
5. What influence upon Hebrew religion did the alliances made by Solomon have?
6. What was the nature of the wisdom of Solomon? his character? strength and weakness?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Discuss Jerusalem in Solomon's time. Find out all you can about Jerusalem to-day.
2. Make a comparative study of life in the time of Abraham, Saul, and Solomon.
3. Note that the two books of Kings give the history of Israel from the time of David's old age and Adonijah's attempted usurpation of the throne of the United Kingdom to the release of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, from prison in Babylonia in 562 B.C. The two books of Chronicles give a history of Judah, with special reference to the religious institutions of the Jewish people, the Temple, ritual observances, and the priesthood. The two great sources of Chronicles were the books of Samuel and Kings. Reference is made to various other sources. The following portions of the books of Samuel and Kings are not found in the books of Chronicles: "The entire activity of

³ G. A. Smith, "Jerusalem," Vol. II, pages 77, 78.

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Samuel, and the reign of Saul (except the close); David's lament for Saul and Jonathan; his conflict with Ish-bosheth, and dealings with Mephibosheth; the story of Uriah and Bathsheba; the story of Amnon and Tamar, and Absalom's flight and recall; Absalom's rebellion, and David's exile; the psalm of II Sam., ch. 22 (equals Psalm 18); the 'last words' of David, II Sam. 23:1-7; the intrigues and struggles attending Solomon's accession; evidences of Solomon's wisdom and poetic gifts; Solomon's alliances with foreign women, and his idolatries in later life; his vexation by adversaries, including Jeroboam; the entire history of the Northern Kingdom after the division, except when the account of the Southern Kingdom makes necessary some mention of the Northern; the governorship and murder of Gedaliah, after Jerusalem's fall; the exile life of Jehoiachin." ⁴

⁴ Hastings, "Dictionary of the Bible," article on "Chronicles," page 393.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PHœNICIAN BAALISM. ELIJAH. ELISHA

With the death of Solomon and the accession of his son, Rehoboam, the United Hebrew Kingdom came to an end. The immediate cause was the despotic rule of Solomon with its high taxation and forced labor. The more remote causes were the rivalry between the tribes — especially the jealousy between the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, and the tribe of Judah — and the love of independence. “The transition from an elective monarchy to a rigidly despotic rule had been accomplished too quickly. The tribes of Israel had, even in David’s case, set the crown upon his head after a free choice, just as they had done formerly in the case of Saul. Israel had been a purely elective monarchy. David’s sons, however, played in succession the rôle of hereditary successors to the throne. Neither Absalom, nor Adonijah, nor Solomon thought it necessary that he should be first chosen by the tribes. According to their view of it, the succession to the throne of their father belonged to them as the sons of David. Israel had become an hereditary monarchy.” David had not completely solved the problem of attaching the tribes of Israel to his house. “The northern tribes and Benjamin showed a certain distrust of his rule.” Note the kingdom of Ish-bosheth, and the rebellion of Sheba.

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Both these men were of the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's tribe. "Still less was Solomon equal to the task. His despotic tendencies, and especially the oppressive taxation, were certainly not calculated to make the tribes forget that only a short time before this, not birth, but the will of the people, was what entitled a man to sit on the royal throne."¹

The area of the Northern Kingdom was three times that of the Southern Kingdom; the land was more fertile, the population greater, and the wealth more abundant. The soil in Judah was for the most part rocky and barren and, apart from Jerusalem, the country was pastoral rather than agricultural like Israel. Israel was more accessible than Judah and more in touch with world civilization. It was also more exposed and open to attack than Judah, and more desired by foreign invaders. Because of its geographic location it acted as a buffer state between Judah and the armies of Syria and Assyria. The Syrian and Assyrian attacks fell much more heavily on Israel than on Judah. The Northern Kingdom paid tribute a whole century before Judah did, and Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C., nearly one hundred and fifty years before Babylonia conquered the Southern Kingdom in 587 B.C. Because of frequent changes of dynasty by usurpation and assassination Israel was less stable in government than Judah with its one dynasty. Idolatry was practiced in both kingdoms throughout their history. It was only in Judah, however, that the attempt was made to centralize worship in one city, Jerusalem.

¹ R. Kittel, "A History of the Hebrews," Vol. II, pages 241, 242.

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There the Temple of Solomon with the Ark of the Covenant grew continually in prestige and in influence, and was a stimulus to religious ideals.

The division of the United Kingdom weakened the Hebrew people politically, for they were no longer united to oppose the powerful enemies who coveted their territory. But the divine plan made it necessary that exile and suffering should be the lot of the Hebrews, in order that, through the discipline of suffering and of painful experience, they might accomplish their spiritual mission and their destiny. "While the kingdoms were two states, often in rivalry and war with each other, they continued to be one people: one in the consciousness of ancestry and origin; one in tribal affiliation; one in religion and sense of the claims of righteousness. Their disunion was in fact only superficial — in all vital things they had not only the sense of brotherhood but of communal unlikeness to all the nations round about them. On this homogeneous character the prophets and sages could reckon; to it they could appeal in matters of history and motive and destiny."²

The great religious crisis in the Northern Kingdom came in the ninth century when King Ahab by his marriage with the Phœnician princess, Jezebel, caused the introduction of her ancestral religion, the cult of the Phœnician Baal, a sensual religion with worship accompanied by impure practices. As in Solomon's time, it was a cementing of political and commercial relations, but the results were, as before, disastrous. In

² J. F. Genung, "A Guidebook to the Biblical Literature," page 99.

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Samaria Ahab erected a sanctuary for Jezebel, and thither she brought her Baal priests and prophets in order to propagate her religion. She persecuted those prophets of Jehovah who opposed her, and even put some to death. Many Israelites joined in the heathen worship. Ahab himself had a syncretistic form of religion, combining the worship of Jehovah with the Phœnician cult. The names of his children, compounds containing the name of Jehovah — Ahaziah, Jehoram, and Athaliah — suggest that he did not give up the worship of Jehovah, as does his association with Obadiah, a servant of Jehovah, and the prophets who claimed to speak in Jehovah's name.

Elijah, who came from east of the Jordan, was the leader of the opposition to the Phœnician cult. He announced that a drought would come upon Israel as a punishment from Jehovah for Ahab's apostasy. The immoral nature religion of the Phœnician Baal had already become the dominant religion of the court, and Elijah was determined that it should not become the national religion. There were seven thousand true followers of Jehovah in Israel who had not "bowed unto Baal." I Kings 19:18. Elijah demanded that Israel choose between Jehovah and Baal, between a moral religion and an immoral religion. There was to be no compromise. He insisted upon absolute loyalty to Jehovah. "And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." I Kings 18:21. Mount Carmel, at the western end of the plain of Esdraelon, was selected for a test by sacrifice. Jehovah's altar was

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repaired, and Jehovah's divinity was vindicated by the contest. His activity demonstrated his reality. "Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God." The triumph of Israel's God, Jehovah, proved that he alone should be recognized in Israel and that he had exclusive claims to the allegiance of the Israelites. The drought came to an end, Baal was proved to be a powerless and false god, and the prophets of Baal were put to death. Jezebel planned vengeance and Elijah in despair was compelled to flee for his life. He first went south to Beer-sheba and then to Horeb, "the mount of God," where Jehovah was revealed to him, not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire, but in a still, small voice, "a sound of gentle stillness." Elijah had preserved the Jehovah religion and there was no more danger of Phœnician Baalism becoming the national religion. The reforms were continued by Elisha and King Jehu.

Elijah was also the champion of the human rights of the people. He was interested in social justice and he stressed the moral requirements of the Jehovah religion. He showed that Jehovah is a God of righteousness and is opposed to social oppression, and that the moral law is equally binding on king and on subject. Elijah rebuked the tyranny of Ahab, exhibited in the judicial murder of Naboth and his sons and in the confiscation of the vineyard to add to the king's estate. A divine judgment was declared upon Ahab and his house.

Elisha, the successor of Elijah, helped in the rebellion of Jehu which resulted in the overthrow of the Omri dynasty, and in the stamping out of Phœnician

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Baalism both in Israel and in Judah where it had been introduced by Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and wife of Jehoram of Judah.

The Syrian Naaman was among those who benefited by Elisha's many works of mercy. Jehovah was thought of as being limited to the soil of Palestine. So Naaman took back to Syria "two mules' burden of earth" that he might build an altar to the God who gave him health: "For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto Jehovah. In this thing Jehovah pardon thy servant: when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, Jehovah pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace." II Kings 5:17-19.

We are impressed with the moral and spiritual grandeur of the personality of Elijah, the great prophet of the ninth century B.C., who was a greater strength to his nation than "the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Baal was no real god to Elijah. He treated the Phœnician Baal with contempt and irony. It is difficult to think that he believed Baal had any reality or power when we remember his mocking words to the prophets of Baal: "Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked."

The preparation had been made for the prophets of the eighth century and later — the great prophets who have left to us a wonderful literature containing their

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messages. It is but a step from Elijah to the prophets who insisted that Jehovah was not only the only God Israel might worship, but the only existing God, and that the gods of foreign peoples were unrealities. The sole Godhead of Jehovah was then established.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the immediate and remote causes of the disruption of the United Kingdom.
2. Make a comparison of the two Hebrew kingdoms. Of what value was the Northern Kingdom to the Southern? In what way was the divine plan being worked out?
3. What is the significance of the struggle of the religion of Jehovah with Phœnician Baalism?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Make a study of the relations between the two kingdoms during the period 931-722 B.C. and of the relations of Israel and Judah with their neighbors, Phœnicia, Syria, Egypt, Assyria.
2. What was the work of the "sons of the prophets" in the time of Elijah and Elisha?
3. What is meant by "false prophecy"? See especially I Kings, ch. 22; Deut., ch. 18; Jer., chs. 23; 28; 29; Ezek., ch. 13.
4. Compare Elijah with Elisha in character and in work.

CHAPTER XV

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM. AMOS. HOSEA

To get a clear idea of the life of the Hebrews in pre-exilic, exilic, and postexilic times we must combine the accounts in the historical books of the Old Testament with the messages of the Hebrew prophets, who give us in their prophecies a picture of political, social, moral, and religious conditions in their own time.

In the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, who spoke against the sins of Israel in the eighth century B.C., we find a vivid account of the conditions in the Northern Kingdom in its closing years which led to the end of the Kingdom in 722 B.C. Amos prophesied in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II, after the successes alluded to in II Kings 14:25. Both Syria and Assyria were weak, and Jeroboam had utilized the opportunity to recover lost territory and to restore Israel's ancient boundaries. There was security and peace and seeming prosperity. Hosea prophesied at this time and also after the death of Jeroboam and before the Syro-Ephraimitic War of 734 B.C.

After Jeroboam's reign there was a period of anarchy, misrule, and civil war; four of six kings were assassinated and one died in captivity. Zechariah, Jeroboam's son, was murdered after a reign of six months by Shallum, who usurped the throne. Shallum in turn was assassinated four weeks later by Menahem,

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another ambitious office seeker, who held the throne with the aid of Assyria. Pekahiah, Menahem's son, was murdered by Pekah, and Pekah was slain at the wish of Hoshea, the last king of the Northern Kingdom.

The conditions in the Northern Kingdom which resulted in its decline and fall are portrayed by Amos and Hosea. Prosperity was only apparent, not real. The poor were oppressed and exploited, the needy crushed by the rich, who stored up in their palaces wealth secured by violence and robbery. With ill-gotten gains went luxury, extravagance, debauchery, sensuality, selfishness, with pride in past national victory and carelessness and indifference toward the welfare of the country and the impending doom of national dissolution. Amos speaks against those who live in houses of hewn stone ornamented with ivory, who "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" or their own Northern Kingdom. Hosea says: "Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; for Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out, and blood toucheth blood."

Bribery and graft were common in the courts. The

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righteous were sold "for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." Dishonesty was prevalent in business. The merchants used short weights and measures and sold adulterated goods and goods of inferior quality, "the refuse of the wheat." Men wished for Sabbaths and other days when trade was suspended to be past, so that they might be back again in their shops to cheat their customers.

Kings were chosen not for their fitness to rule, but because of selfishness on the part of plotting factions working by intrigue and conspiracy: "They have set up kings, but not by me." Unity and coöperation were lacking in the nation. Pro-Assyrians sought help from Assyria while pro-Egyptians attempted to get aid from Egypt. Hosea urged trust in Jehovah who alone could give what was needed, and pointed out the folly of making alliances. "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria."

Priests and professional prophets who should lead the people in the right way were corrupt and false guides. Those who would speak out boldly against wrong conduct in the nation were commanded to be silent. "But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not." "They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly."

Idolatry, immorality, and license in the name of religion were common. Debasing immoral practices were carried on at various sanctuaries. The calves set up by Jeroboam I at Beth-el and Dan still received adoration. There was no lack of zeal in honoring

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Jehovah outwardly; costly offerings and sacrifices with elaborate ritual were given in abundance at the shrines, but the worship was not accompanied by right living, by personal and social righteousness, by a true knowledge of God and his requirements. Hosea says of their idols: "Of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off . . . the workman made it, and it is no God; yea, the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces. . . . And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, even idols according to their own understanding, all of them the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves." Amos says that Jehovah hates and despises the feasts of Israel: "I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols."

The people looked forward with joy and eagerness to the day of Jehovah, not believing that any harm could come to them, thinking of it as a day when Jehovah would manifest his power for the sole benefit of his people, that they might have greater prosperity, enjoy perfect peace, and find all their enemies overthrown. But Amos declared that the day of Jehovah would bring to the nation darkness and not light. In the invasion of Israel by a foreign foe and in captivity in a foreign land Amos saw the day of Jehovah approaching, for Israel's guilt must be punished: "Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land."

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To the people of Israel living in the midst of the conditions already described, Amos and Hosea gave their great messages of justice and love. Amos stressed especially Jehovah as a God of justice and righteousness who asks for justice and right conduct among men: "But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Hosea emphasized the truth of Jehovah as a God of love and mercy who seeks love among men: "For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." In later chapters we shall see more fully what their teaching was about God and man's relation to God and to his fellow man.

Assyria put an end to the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. As early as 734 B.C. it had carried into captivity the inhabitants of territory in the north and east. Menahem had given tribute to Assyria and Hoshea reigned as a vassal of Assyria. The capture of Samaria, the capital, caused the extinction of the Northern Kingdom; its area was absorbed into the Assyrian Empire and Assyrian officials ruled in the land. Israel as a separate nation ceased to exist. The upper and middle classes were deported to parts of the Assyrian Empire and amalgamated with the heathen population. Their identity was lost and their religious growth arrested. "What a difference there is between them and the Judean exiles, whom we shall find profiting by their deportation to Babylon, amending their lives, correcting their former errors, and so becoming capable of accomplishing a restoration, defective indeed from a political point of view, but deeply significant and pregnant with momentous consequences of a moral and

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religious kind, so that the exile marks at once the end of Israel's persistent idolatry and the assured triumph of monotheism." "Judah alone was left to represent the people of Jehovah, and Jerusalem had no longer any rival either as the capital of Israel or as the chief sanctuary of the national God."

The Northern Kingdom came to an end after an existence of a little over two hundred years. Its wealth was greater than Judah's and hence more desired by enemy nations. Its situation made it more accessible to invasion than Judah. The chief cause for Israel's decline and fall was the corruption within the state; this weakened the country and made it impossible for the people to unite and withstand the attack of the Assyrians.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Read in the books of I and II Kings the account of the reigns of the kings of Israel. Give an estimate of the reigns and characters of the different kings.
2. What were the causes of the downfall of the Northern Kingdom? Do the same causes operate to-day in the downfall of nations?
3. What were conditions in the Northern Kingdom as learned from the prophecies of Amos and Hosea?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What was the origin of the Samaritans? Discuss their Pentateuch; their Temple.
2. What became of the "Lost Tribes"?

CHAPTER XVI

THE ASSYRIAN INVASIONS. ISAIAH. MICAH

In the reign of Uzziah, a contemporary of Jeroboam II of Israel, Judah enjoyed a period of great prosperity, which was accompanied, however, by many evils. In the reign of his grandson, Ahaz, the Syro-Ephraimitic War took place. Israel and Syria united in a coalition against the world power, Assyria, and attempted to force Judah into a triple confederacy. Ahaz refused to join and Judah was invaded by the combined armies of the two countries. The Judean king sought the assistance of Assyria, and after appealing to Assyria for help, which was speedily given, became a vassal and paid tribute. Isaiah opposed the making of such an alliance, but when it was made he believed it best for Judah to be true to its agreement and thought that the Southern Kingdom could survive only by being faithful to its vassalage and by accepting the rule of Assyria.

Isaiah's message to Ahaz at this crisis was to have faith in Jehovah; there was only one real Helper and the king should rely upon God alone; he had nothing to fear from the two nations on the north that were soon to come to an end. When Isaiah went out to meet Ahaz, who was inspecting the city's water supply in order to prepare for a possible siege, he asked Ahaz to remain calm: "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, . . . If ye will not be-

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lieve, surely ye shall not be established." The fear of king and people is graphically portrayed by the prophet: "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind."

Assyria took Damascus, the Syrian capital, in 732 B.C. In 722 B.C. the Northern Kingdom came to an end and became part of the Assyrian Empire. Thus the two buffer countries which lay between Judah and Assyria fell before Assyria, and Judah's territory lay open to the foe of the north. Isaiah predicted the approaching fall of Israel's capital, Samaria: "Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, will he cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot."

Isaiah did his best to keep Judah from entering upon entangling foreign alliances, but there was a party in Judah that wished to get the support of Egypt against Assyria, and Hezekiah, contrary to Isaiah's advice, joined in a coalition of Palestinian states to throw off the Assyrian yoke. The prophet spoke much of the futility of trust in Egypt: "Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that make a league, but not of my Spirit, that they may add sin to sin; that set out to go down into Egypt,

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and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh. . . . For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still. . . . Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah! . . . Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." It was a covenant with death, and an agreement with Sheol. "When the overflowing scourge [Assyria] shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."

Political intrigue and a diplomacy of deceit were not equal to the great emergency. The situation was intolerable: "For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Faith in Jehovah was needed — this was Isaiah's word: "He that believeth shall not be in haste. . . . In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

When the Philistine city, Ashdod, was besieged by the Assyrian troops in 711 B.C., Isaiah walked the streets of Jerusalem for three years, clad in the garb of a captive of war and barefooted, to impress upon the people the folly of relying upon Egypt as a source of help.

Twenty-one years after the fall of Israel Sennacherib's army invaded Judah and took forty-six of its fortified cities, and Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." At this supreme crisis in

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701 B.C., the statesman prophet Isaiah advised Jerusalem not to surrender and declared that Jehovah would protect and preserve his city and that the Assyrians would be destroyed. The word of the prophet was vindicated. The city was besieged, but in a wonderful way Jerusalem was suddenly delivered and Sennacherib was compelled to march away. "Because of thy raging against me, and because thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. . . . And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of mount Zion they that shall escape. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it."

Jerusalem was "Ariel," Jehovah's altar hearth, the home of his Temple, his dwelling place. It was needed by Jehovah in the carrying out of his purpose; the time had not come for its destruction and the exile of its people. In spite of the sin of Judah and the faithlessness of the majority of its people, there was a remnant of the faithful who were to constitute the redeeming element of the true Israel. "The nation, as such, had not yet reached that assured stage of spiritual development, that integrity of character and conscience, where it could afford to surrender. It was in truth too early for Judah to enter upon its distinctive mission to the

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world. A century of reprieve was needed for Israel's redeeming personality to be born and reach the vigor by which it could cope with exile and dispersion. The saving remnant must become a determining energy and redeeming element."¹

Conditions in Judah in the time of Isaiah and Micah, eighth century B.C., were similar to those in Israel during the same century, as described by Amos and Hosea. The rich in Judah had taken the land of the poor to add to their great estates. Extravagance and luxury were common with the wealthy. The women were vain and frivolous, caring for finery and display. Hireling prophets spoke smooth things; the rulers did not care for justice; the priests taught for hire. Drunkenness was prevalent. In religion there was elaborate ceremonial and ritual, with abundance of sacrifices and offerings, but accompanying these were low ideals and customs of living, insincerity and obtuseness to spiritual things. In the midst of such conditions Isaiah called upon his hearers: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Micah has expressed the essence of religion: "What doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God."

¹ J. F. Genung, "A Guidebook to the Biblical Literature," page 185.

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QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why did Isaiah oppose the making of an alliance with Assyria by Ahaz? Why did he advise keeping the alliance when once made?
2. What were the reasons for Isaiah's opposition to an alliance with Egypt?
3. Why did Judah come to an end in 587 B.C. and not in 701? Can you see God's plan being accomplished?
4. Read through the prophecies of Isaiah spoken in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, and of Micah, in the reign of Hezekiah. What were the conditions of society in Judah? Compare these conditions with those in Israel at the same time.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. The cruelty of the Assyrians.
2. The western campaigns of Sennacherib.

CHAPTER XVII

REACTION AND REFORMATION. JEREMIAH AND THE DECLINE AND FALL OF JUDAH

The reign of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, was a period of violent moral and religious reaction, with much idolatry, the flourishing of foreign cults, a general revival of heathen practices, and great hostility to those prophets who were true to Jehovah, some of whom suffered a martyr's death.

The finding of the book of the Law in 621 B.C. caused in the reign of Josiah, Manasseh's grandson, a thoroughgoing religious reformation with the centralization of all lawful national worship at the Jerusalem Temple, the suppression of idolatry, and the abolishing of the local sanctuaries. Jeremiah's early prophecies doubtless helped to prepare for this reform. But the results of Josiah's reform were temporary, not lasting, and only outwardly transformed the nation. Under Jehoia-kim, Josiah's son, there was a reaction in favor of the popular heathen cults and idolatry of various kinds reappeared. This condition went on until the fall of the Southern Kingdom in 587 B.C.

Judah was a province of the Egyptian Empire 608-605 B.C. and then the new Babylonian Empire gained the supremacy of western Asia and Jehoia-kim became a vassal of Nebuchadrezzar. Jeremiah's message to Judah was to submit to the power of Babylonia, for disloyalty would mean exile and captivity. In his

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prophecies Nebuchadrezzar is called Jehovah's servant, whose work is to punish Judah and the surrounding nations for their sins. In Jeremiah's contest with Hananiah he opposed the false prophets who favored the plan of revolution against Babylonia.

Jehoiakim revolted against Babylonian rule at the close of his reign, and during the short reign of his son, Jehoiachin, the Babylonian army laid siege to Jerusalem. Jehoiachin surrendered unconditionally and the king and possibly thirty thousand of the population of Judah were carried captive to Babylonia.

Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was placed on the throne by Nebuchadrezzar. But Egypt was intriguing with Judah and Zedekiah finally revolted, relying upon help from Egypt, and refused to pay the tribute due Babylonia. Nebuchadrezzar with his army invaded Judah and besieged Jerusalem, which was taken after a siege of eighteen months.

Jeremiah at the time of the siege saw that the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Judah were inevitable, and he counseled surrender to Babylonia. "And I spake to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as Jehovah hath spoken concerning the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? And hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; for they prophesy a lie unto you." Jer. 27:12-14.

We learn about conditions in Jerusalem and Judah

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in the seventh century and before 587 B.C. from the prophecies of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Zephaniah speaks of the practical atheists in his day who said in their hearts, "Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil." Jerusalem, he says, is an oppressing city: "Woe to her that is rebellious and polluted!" The princes in her midst are "roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; . . . her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have profaned the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law." Habakkuk speaks of injustice in Judah: "Therefore the law is slacked, and justice doth never go forth; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore justice goeth forth perverted." Ezekiel tells of idolatry in Jerusalem before the fall of the city. Even in the Temple courts foreign cults were present: "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of Jehovah's house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz. . . . And he brought me into the inner court of Jehovah's house; and behold, at the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Jehovah, and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east."

Throughout the prophecies of Jeremiah we find the prophet speaking against the idolatry of Judah: "They have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands." Priests, rulers, prophets, all had been faithless, and unmindful of the care and guidance of Jehovah: "Neither said they, Where is Jehovah that brought us

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up out of the land of Egypt, . . . I brought you into a plentiful land, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is Jehovah? and they that handle the law knew me not: the rulers also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. . . . Hath a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. . . . For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water . . . they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets; who say to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: . . . in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us. But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. . . . And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire.”

Injustice, covetousness, deceit were present throughout the land. The fundamental lack was that they did not know God. “For my people are foolish, they know me not; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. . . . Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can

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find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her. . . . For among my people are found wicked men: they watch, as fowlers lie in wait; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxed rich. They are waxed fat, they shine: yea, they overpass in deeds of wickedness; they plead not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, that they may prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. . . . For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. . . . And they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity."

In the midst of such corruption there were false prophets who strengthened "the hands of evil-doers": "The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake I unto them: they prophesy unto you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their own heart. . . . They say continually unto them that despise me, Jehovah hath said, Ye shall have peace; and unto every one that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart they say, No evil shall come upon you."

Many in Jeremiah's time believed that Jerusalem could not be taken because the Temple was there. Jeremiah denounced this superstitious confidence in the Temple and told his hearers, guilty of moral and re-

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ligious wrongs, that the presence of the sanctuary would not save them from the Babylonians: "Thus saith Jehovah: If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I send unto you, even rising up early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore."

Jeremiah saw that the results of Josiah's reformation were not permanent; it was a reform imposed from without. There was outward conformity in Josiah's reign, but what was needed was a change of heart and of character, a transformation from within, to make the reform lasting. The law must be written on the heart. The important thing was the individual and his relation to God. That relationship did not depend on residence in Palestine or on the presence of the Temple in Jerusalem. Even if the Jewish nation fell, communion with God was possible, for religion was an inner affair,

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a personal experience. Moreover, each individual was responsible to God, who deals with each one according to his own deserts: "But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge." In the conception of the new covenant we find one of the greatest statements of religious truth in the Hebrew religion: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

In the period covered by this chapter we have seen the reaction under Manasseh following the good reign of Hezekiah, the reformation under Josiah, and the reaction again under Jehoiakim and those who followed him — conditions which led to Judah's decline and fall. The immediate cause for the fall of Jerusalem and the end of Judah was the revolt of Zedekiah against his overlord, the king of Babylonia. The real cause was the corruption in the Southern Kingdom. Internal

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conditions were not right; the moral and religious reformation called for by the prophets had not been carried out; there was a lack of faith in Jehovah and of loyalty to him.

Exile in Babylonia seemed to the majority of Jewish captives a calamity. That it was a long educative experience fraught with a large meaning for the Jews and for mankind we shall see in the chapter following.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Why were the results of Josiah's reformation not permanent?
2. What were the conditions in Judah after Josiah's death as learned from the prophecies of Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel?
3. What is Jeremiah's conception of the new covenant?
4. What were the causes for the downfall of the Southern Kingdom?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. What were the political relations of Judah with Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia in the period 931-587 B.C.?
2. Discuss the character and extent of idolatry in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Why was it so common? What effect did it have upon the people? What forms did it take?
3. Make an estimate of the reigns and characters of the different rulers of Judah. Of the forty-two rulers of the United and Divided Kingdoms, how many were good rulers, reigning in justice and righteousness?

CHAPTER XVIII

EXILE BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON. THE RETURNED JEWS AND THE RESTORA- TION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AT JERUSALEM

We have very little information concerning the religious life of the exiles in Babylonia. False prophets and prophetesses led some of the people astray in the early years of exile. Jer. 29:21-32; Ezek., chs. 13; 14:8-23. The exiles carried with them many idolatrous practices. Ezek. 14:3-23; 20:30-49. As far as we know there was no temple or altar in Babylonia upon which sacrifices were offered to Jehovah by the exiles. Fasting came into great prominence and became a common religious institution. We know of four yearly fast days observed during the Exile: the fast of the fourth month, in memory of the entrance of the Babylonians into Jerusalem; the fast of the fifth month, the destruction of the Temple and city of Jerusalem; the fast of the seventh month, the murder of Gedaliah; and the fast of the tenth month, the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem. Zech. 8:19.

During the Exile emphasis was probably laid on the observance of the Sabbath, for it could be observed in Babylonia as a day of assembling for worship and cessation from work. The Sabbath was a sign that Jehovah was the God of the Israelites, and that they were his people, Ezek. 20:12, 20; and by observing it

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the exiles could sustain their feeling that they were Jehovah's people. From the assembling for public worship, for united prayer, and for the reading and exposition of such portions of the Old Testament as were then written, the synagogue probably took its origin, and continued after the offering of sacrifice was resumed at the Jerusalem Temple after the return from exile.

The majority of the Jews in Babylonian exile were from Jerusalem and their great longing for Jerusalem is expressed in Psalm 137:

“By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive
required of us songs,
And they that wasted us re-
quired of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing Jehovah's
song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her
skill.
Let my tongue cleave to the
roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.”

Many of the Jews in exile were at times discouraged and in despair. “These bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; and we are clean cut off.” Ezek.

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37:11. To such people came the glad news of speedy release by the deliverer, Cyrus the Persian, who would overthrow Babylonia and release the Jewish captives. The omnipotent Jehovah would accomplish his purpose. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins." Isa. 40:1, 2. Jehovah "saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof; . . . [Jehovah] saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and of the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isa. 44:26-28.

When the city of Jerusalem fell in 587 B.C. the national life of Judah came to an end. Each one in exile stood by himself. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, asserted the moral responsibility of the individual before God: "All souls are mine; . . . the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18:4. A new disposition was needed: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep mine ordinances, and do them." Ezek. 36:26, 27.

Haggai and Zechariah prophesied soon after the return from exile, and encouraged the people in Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple that it might be the religious center of worship. Haggai said to the people, "Is it a

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time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? " Both prophets told of the future glory of the city Jerusalem and its Temple.

In the prophecy of Malachi we learn of conditions in Jerusalem in the fifth century B.C. The priests were offering inferior sacrifices: " Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar. . . . And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick, it is no evil! Present it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee? or will he accept thy person? saith Jehovah of hosts." The ideal priest is portrayed: " The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts." A serious problem was the divorcing of Hebrew wives and the marrying into the families of the surrounding peoples: " Jehovah hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. . . . For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel." The prophet also spoke against those who questioned God's justice and thought that religion was not worth while: " Ye have wearied Jehovah with your words. . . . In that ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of Jehovah, and he delighteth in them; or where is the God of justice? . . . Ye have said, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? and

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now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are built up; yea, they tempt God, and escape." Malachi asserted that God will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked: "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the sojourner from his right, and fear not me, saith Jehovah of hosts."

We also learn about conditions in Jerusalem in the fifth century B.C. from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra sought to do away with the practice of intermarriage with foreign women by the Jews and even some of the priests. Nehemiah rebuked the rich for taking an exorbitant rate of interest from the poorer Jews, and the property taken as security from the borrowers was restored and the claim to interest on the loans was remitted. He also worked for the right observance of the Sabbath, and against the intermarriage of Jews and heathen aliens.

A great assembly of the people was held in Jerusalem in the seventh month, 444 B.C., and Ezra the priest and scribe read and expounded "the book of the law of Moses." In a covenant the people solemnly pledged themselves to obey the whole law, and especially to abstain from the custom of intermarriage with the heathen, to observe the Sabbath, and to provide for the sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple. The covenant entered into by the community was the beginning of legalism or the rise of Judaism. In the zeal to observe the law in the right manner a large body of tradition

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developed which dealt with all the details of life. Not only the written law of the Old Testament was binding, but later the oral law, "the tradition of the elders," a mass of minute decisions about the Old Testament, was developed and handed down by the scribes and was considered authoritative.

With the return to Palestine after the period of exile came the practical disappearance of idolatry, and the desire for alien forms of worship so prevalent in pre-exilic days was absent. The Jews in Babylonian exile had been surrounded on every hand by polytheistic religious practices. Magnificent worship of idols was carried on in heathen temples. The Jews had to choose between the gods of Babylonia and the one God, Jehovah. Some of them were doubtless merged in Babylonian heathenism. But the more religious Jews desired to maintain their distinctive faith and be true to their religion. The struggle between ethical monotheism and heathen forms of religion came to an end. With the period after the Exile we have the final success of Hebrew monotheism and all that it means to the world to-day. The discipline of the Exile prepared the Jews for their mission and destiny.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was the religious condition of the Jewish exiles in Babylonia in the sixth century B.C.?
2. What were the conditions in Jerusalem in the early years after the restoration of the Jewish community and in the time of Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah?
3. Why is the assembly held in 444 B.C. by Ezra called by some the "birthday of Judaism"?
4. What is the significance of the disappearance of idolatry after the Exile?

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FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. The Persian Empire in the time of Cyrus.
2. The dispersion of the Jews in postexilic times.
3. The meaning of fasting.
4. The characteristics of Ezra and Nehemiah.

CHAPTER XIX

ETERNAL PRINCIPLES IN OLD TESTAMENT LAWS

The Hebrew code of laws is found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is not the purpose of this chapter to go into a critical discussion of what laws are Mosaic and what laws in their present form originated at a later time. A study of the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, made nine hundred years before the time of Moses, makes it certain that many of the laws in the Pentateuch are older than the age of Moses. On the other hand many of the laws of Moses may have been later expanded, revised, and modified to meet changing situations and new needs of the Jewish nation. The important point to have in mind is that it is certain that Moses gave the fundamental principles on which all the laws in the Old Testament are based.

A study of the laws will show that they are based upon ideals of justice and fairness, of kindness and regard for humanity.

Lying and dishonesty are condemned: "Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Ex. 23:1. "Thou shalt not have in thy bag diverse weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house diverse measures, a great and a small. A perfect and a

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just weight shalt thou have; a perfect and just measure shalt thou have." Deut. 25:13-15.

Judges are to judge justly, and bribes are not to be accepted: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor." Lev. 19:15; cf. Deut. 1:16, 17. "Thou shalt not wrest justice: thou shalt not respect persons; neither shalt thou take a bribe; for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous." Deut. 16:19; cf. Ex. 23:8.

The accused is protected against unjust charges — the testimony of at least two witnesses is required to convict a person of any crime, Deut. 19:15, and the false witness is punished by the same penalty which he sought to bring upon the accused: "If the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother," Deut. 19:18, 19.

Employers of labor are to care for the rights of their employees. "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy sojourners . . . in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it)." Deut. 24:14, 15. No one shall do any work on the Sabbath — "thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou." Deut. 5:14.

The poor are provided for by many laws. They have

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a share in the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. Deut. 12:18; 16:11. Gleanings are to be left for the poor. "When thou reapest thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow; . . . when thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it after thee: it shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless, and for the widow." Deut. 24:19-21; cf. Lev. 19:9, 10.

Positive injunctions are given to show kindness and love: "Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Lev. 19:18. "Love ye therefore the sojourner [or resident alien]; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt." Deut. 10:19. The weak are protected. Ex. 22:21-24.

Love toward God is to be the driving power for love to man: "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," Deut. 6:5. "And now, Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" Deut. 10:12, 13.

The Decalogue, or "Ten Words," is found in the twentieth chapter of the book of Exodus and in the fifth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy. It is a sum-

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mary of the fundamental duties toward God and neighbor. The principles of the Ten Commandments are God-given and are applicable to all times and peoples. The first four Commandments define the duties men owe to God; the last six define the duties men owe to each other. Some of the applications of the Ten Commandments may be briefly summarized as follows:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” This is clearly a demand for monotheism — the worship of one God. But Judaism and Mohammedanism are both monotheistic religions. The important question is, What kind of God do we worship? Surely the God of love, the Father God, as revealed to us by his Son, our Saviour.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image.” This does not seem to apply to us to-day. We think of primitive people, perhaps of fetish and idol worshipers in the heart of Africa. But anything that hinders us from living a life as near the Christian ideal as possible is a graven image. Business, education, social life, if they stand between us and God, may be as much fetishes or idols made of stone as those of the heathen. The test for any form in church worship is whether it is thought of as an end in itself or whether it is a successful means to the worship of the Father. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth” — in spirit, sincerely, and in truth, with a true conception of his nature.

“Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain.” This is directed not only against profanity — the careless, frivolous, irreverent, and blasphemous

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use of the name of the deity, and of all that is sacred in religion — but also against those who swear by all that is sacred that they are telling the truth, or that they will keep their promise, when what they say is untrue and their intention is to break their word. Christ said, "Let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay." Let your word be as good as your bond.

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy." How shall we keep the Lord's day sacred? Christ gave two principles to guide us in the observance of this day: "It is lawful to do good on the sabbath day," and "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." The Sabbath was made for the welfare of humanity. It was made for man's whole nature — physical, mental, social, and especially spiritual — and no one has the right to disregard the needs of the religious nature and the nourishment and inspiration that come from social worship and the message of Christian teaching as applied to the life of to-day.

"Honor thy father and thy mother." Obedience to parents is called for from the children, but also fairness and sympathy and understanding and love from the father and mother as they seek to work out in the home group the democracy of the Kingdom of God, the "rule of God in human hearts and lives."

"Thou shalt not kill." Clearly this is a command against murder, which is illegal killing, unlawful not only according to the law of man but also according to the law of God. Animals were killed for food and sacrifice in Old Testament times, and the penalty of death was meted out for certain crimes. Jesus forbade anger, contempt, hatred, as well as murder. He em-

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phasized the importance of the thoughts and feelings, which are the breeding places for an ill will that may eventually express itself in actual murder. In like manner he interpreted the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," as including not only impure acts but impure thought and wrong desire.

"Thou shalt not steal." This commandment is against all forms of dishonesty, cheating as well as theft, whether within the law or not, and whether customary in business and social life or not.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." Telling lies about one's neighbor whether in the court room or outside it is forbidden. Any story that we know to be untrue or have doubts about is not to be repeated, especially if it will injure some one's reputation and standing in the community. In all our judgments we are to think first whether we should like to be judged by the same standard by which we are judging others. "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Matt. 7:12.

"Thou shalt not covet" anything that is thy neighbor's. Coveting is unlawful desire for that which is another's. Envy in the heart brings unhappiness. Jesus taught positively, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom."

Christ summed up the teaching of the Ten Commandments in the words of the Old Testament, cf. Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with

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all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Matt. 22:37, 39. Love to God and love to fellow man who is a neighbor — that to Jesus was the essence of true religion. But who is my neighbor? The Jew thought of his neighbor as another of his own race. People think of those in their own country as neighbors. Christ gave a far larger meaning to the word. He told the story of the Good Samaritan to make clear what it is to be a neighbor — to give help whenever and wherever needed. A neighbor is one whom we can help. Christ also gave us the new commandment which could not be given in Old Testament days but only after the Word had become flesh, and dwelt among us, exemplifying the life of love: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:34, 35. Here is an infinite standard — to love as Jesus loved. In our home life, our community life, as a nation among other nations, we are to express good will. We are to be perfect — perfect in love — even as God is perfect. Matt. 5:48.

The Ten Commandments were given to mankind through the Hebrew nation over three thousand years ago, but they are for all time. In them Jehovah proclaimed his will, and it is important that we think about their meaning for our own time, and their extreme significance, for in them we find eternal principles for living. In the laws of the Old Testament also we find underlying principles of great permanent value.

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QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Give some examples of laws in the Old Testament based upon ideals of justice and of regard for humanity.
2. How did Christ sum up the Ten Commandments? What is the significance of the new commandment given by Christ?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Note that all but two of the Commandments are prohibitions. What two Commandments are given in positive form? Why is the Tenth the most inward of the Commandments? Could it be enforced? How would one know another was coveting? What two Commandments refer to sins of speech? Compare the form of the Commandments in Ex. ch. 20, with the form in Deut., ch. 5.

2. What principles in the following laws are found in our laws to-day?

"Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark [boundary stone], which they of old time have set." Deut. 19:14.

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Deut. 24:16.

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement [parapet] for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence." Deut. 22:8.

See also Ex. 21:18, 19, 33, 34; 22:5, 6, 22, 25-27; 23:1, 4, 10, 11; Lev. 19:9, 10, 13-16, 32-36; Deut. 1:16, 17; 15:7, 8, 12-14; 16:11, 16-19; 17:6; 19:11-21; 22:1-4, 6; 23:24, 25; 24:10, 17, 19-21; 25:13-15; 27:16-19, 24-26.

3. Make a study of the laws in the Pentateuch that stress kindness to the poor, the oppressed, the slave or servant, the animal. Note, for example, the law concerning escaped slaves: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, . . . thou shalt not oppress him." Deut. 23:15. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the grain." Deut. 25:4.

4. For changes that Christ made in the Old Testament laws, note especially the law of divorce, Deut. 24:1; Matt. 5:32; the laws of clean and unclean animals, Lev., ch. 11; Deut., ch. 14; Mark 7:19: "This he said, making all meats clean"; the law of

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retaliation, "eye for eye," Ex. 21:24; Matt. 5:39. For his teaching concerning the Sixth and Seventh Commandments (murder and adultery forbidden) see Matt. 5:21, 22, 27-32.

5. Compare the Code of Hammurabi with the laws in the Pentateuch, especially with the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:33; name from Ex. 24:7).

CHAPTER XX

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF PROPHECY

From the history in the Old Testament we see that the great majority of the kings in both of the Hebrew Kingdoms were selfish and oppressive — men not interested in good government, justice, or righteousness. The greatest characters in the Old Testament are not as a rule the kings but the prophets and those who are inspired by prophetic ideals. We think especially of Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Hezekiah, Josiah, Daniel, and Nehemiah.

Preëminent in the history of the Hebrews are the prophets. They were noble, heroic characters, practical men of affairs, patriots, statesmen, religious leaders, reformers, great preachers and teachers of individual and social righteousness. They were spokesmen and interpreters for God. They spoke for God. Their work concerned past, present, and future. They interpreted the events of history and of God's providence. They called men to repentance. They proclaimed God's mind and purpose and prepared the way for the realization of his plans. We may read their wonderful and powerful addresses in the Old Testament. "It was their work to make known the will of God and to urge men to bring their lives into harmony with that will. They were unceasingly engaged in advancing the knowledge of his character and

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requirements.”¹ “The Hebrew prophets were the greatest force for good that the world ever knew until the time of the appearance of Christianity.”

They spoke their messages not in solitude but to groups of people, to audiences for the most part interested in their words, however hostile to their message. Their voices were heard in the great cities, at Beth-el, at Samaria, at Jerusalem, before the crowds assembled on public occasions of fast or festival, in the Temple courts or at the city gates. Practical men they were, speaking to the need of Israel, knowing its sin and also its possibilities for good; fearless souls, also, they were “full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” The Spirit gave them enthusiasm for their mission, courage for their task, a message for their age, and principles of living for all time.

Each prophet used his own vocabulary and spoke in his own individual manner. Amos was a shepherd and we should expect him to draw many of his illustrations from the life which he knew so well. So he used the comparison, “As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear.” Amos 3:12; cf. Ex. 22:13; I Sam. 17:34, 35; see also Amos 4:1, “Ye kine of Bashan,” a reference to the women of Israel as well-fed cattle. There is not much left of a sheep when a lion gets through with it, and only a very few of those rich people of the Northern Kingdom who were living in luxury would be saved from the enemy

¹ A. F. Kirkpatrick, “The Doctrine of the Prophets,” page 15.

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when the Assyrian finished his attack. Hosea, well acquainted with the country, took his illustrations from outdoor life. He said that the idolatrous people of the Northern Kingdom should become nothing, "as the morning cloud, and as the dew that passeth early away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the threshing-floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney." Hos. 13:3.

The methods used by the prophets are very interesting. Often they desired to get, if possible, the assent of their hearers to the principle that sin ought to be punished. After David had taken Bath-sheba from her husband, Uriah, Nathan the prophet went to David, pretending to bring a case to the king for judgment. II Sam. 12:1-15. He told David the story of the poor man who had nothing except a little pet lamb. In the same city there lived a rich man who, although he had exceeding many flocks and herds, when a traveler came, did not take of his own sheep and cattle for food for the wayfaring man but took the poor man's lamb and prepared it. David's anger was greatly kindled against the rich man, and he said, "[He] is worthy to die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Then Nathan said to David: "You are the man! You, too, like the rich man, have stolen. You have smitten Uriah with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife." David, as Nathan desired, was convicted of sin, and professed repentance.

In the same manner Isaiah, in his parable of the vineyard, Isa. 5:1-7, told his audience about a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. The owner dug about it, and

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cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vines. He took the best care of it, and expected it to yield good grapes, but it yielded worthless fruit. "O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard?" Then comes the application. Isaiah interpreted the parable: "For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry." The vineyard would no longer be cared for. Judah must be destroyed. This was Isaiah's logical conclusion.

Amos, at Beth-el, in the Northern Kingdom, spoke first of the judgment that would come upon the surrounding nations. Syria, Philistia, Phœnicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab, even Israel's neighbor on the south, Judah, would be punished for their sins. Then he brought the accusation home. If other countries were to be punished for the wrongs they had done, the Northern Kingdom also would not be spared, Amos 1:3-9:10.

Sometimes the prophets taught through symbolic actions. Ahijah laid hold of his new garment and tore it into twelve pieces, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel and indicating that Jehovah was going to divide the kingdom of Solomon. I Kings 11:30-36. Isaiah, in order to announce the coming defeat of Egypt and Ethiopia, walked half clothed and barefoot, like a captive, for three years. Isa., ch. 20. Jeremiah placed bonds and bars upon his neck to symbolize the necessity for the Southern Kingdom to submit patiently to the

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Babylonian yoke of Nebuchadrezzar. Jer. 27:1-11; 28:10, 13.

The prophets often met ridicule, opposition, and persecution. Micaiah because of his prophecy was put into prison by King Ahab. I Kings, ch. 22. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, threatened vengeance upon Elijah and planned to take his life. I Kings, ch. 19. The chief priest at the temple of Beth-el interrupted the address of Amos and accused him of being a conspirator, saying that the Northern Kingdom was not able to endure all his words. He claimed that the work of Amos was hostile, because he predicted that the nation would come to an end and the people go into captivity as punishment for unrighteousness. Amos, 7:10-13. He called Amos in a sneering tone a visionary, a dreamer, and told him to go to his own country, Judah, and there prophesy, but not to speak any more at Beth-el, for it was the king's sanctuary, and a royal residence. But that was the very reason Amos was there — to address the leaders of the nation at the great national sanctuary, the principal religious center of the kingdom. Amos, therefore, in a fearless reply said: "I am not a prophet by profession, nor a member of a prophetic guild. 'Jehovah took me from following the flock, and . . . said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' This Amaziah, a mere man, tells me not to prophesy. But thus saith Jehovah, Israel shall surely be led captive out of his land." Amos had indeed heard the divine voice. "'The Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?' Unto his servants the prophets, he reveals his secret purpose." At Jerusalem some of Isaiah's hearers asked: "Why does this

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man talk to us in this way? Does he think that we are children?" And they mocked his teaching. See Isa. 28:9, 10.

Jeremiah, when he had spoken of the approaching capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and foretold disaster and judgment to come upon Judah, was hated and despised as a traitor, although he loved his country as an ardent patriot. His enemies said that he was working against the welfare of the people. Jehoiakim, the king, threw the roll of his prophecies into the fire and burned it. Jer., ch. 36. Highly sensitive, Jeremiah suffered deeply through persecution, and on many occasions was in danger of his life. Jer., chs. 37; 38:4. At times he returned to his house after prophesying and resolved in the future to refrain from speaking in public. "What is the use?" he thought. "The people do not believe me. They do not want to hear about their sins. They do not change their ways. But the call of God comes with such power that I have to prophesy. 'If I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing,'" Jer. 20:9. Here we see in a wonderful way the relation between the divine and human element in prophecy. Compare Micah 3:8. Naturally timid and reluctant to speak, Jeremiah became fearless and heroic because of the strength which God gave him for his difficult task.

The prophets encountered opposition also from those who acting from their own personal advantage proclaimed an easy religion to please their hearers. "Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets that make my

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people to err; that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him," Micah 3:5. "Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!" Ezek. 13:3. "They have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there is no peace." Ezek. 13:10. See also Jer., chs. 23; 28; 29.

Probably the indifference of the great majority of their audience brought the greatest disappointment to the prophets. Only a few responded to the words of truth and desired to live in the right way. To many the words of the prophets, as in Ezekiel's time, were "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice," Ezek. 33:32. They were hearers, and not doers of the word.

CHART OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS

A. The Preëxilic Period, before 587 B.C., the Fall of Jerusalem.

Elijah and Elisha. Prophesied in the Northern Kingdom in the ninth century B.C.

Jonah. Prophesied in the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century.

Amos. Prophesied in the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century. Home in the Southern Kingdom.

Hosea. Prophesied in the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century. Home in the Northern Kingdom.

Isaiah. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom 740-701 B.C. or possibly a little later.

Micah. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom in the eighth century.

Zephaniah. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom before 622 B.C., the reformation of Josiah, king of Judah.

Nahum. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom before the fall of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, 612 B.C.

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Habakkuk. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom shortly before 600 B.C.

Jeremiah. Prophesied in the Southern Kingdom from 627 B.C. until after the fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C.

B. The Exilic Period, 586-537 B.C., and the Postexilic Period, After 537 B.C.

Daniel. Prophesied in Babylon in the time of the Exile.

Obadiah. Prophesied in Judah probably at the time of the Exile, though the dates 791 and 731 B.C. are also thought possible.

Ezekiel. Prophesied in Babylonia 593-571 B.C.

Haggai. Prophesied in Jerusalem 520 B.C.

Zechariah. Prophesied in Jerusalem 520 B.C.

Malachi. Prophesied in Jerusalem 420 B.C., though the date 460-450 B.C. is also thought possible.

Joel. Prophesied in Jerusalem, probably about 400 B.C., though some authorities place him in the preëxilic period in the eighth or ninth century B.C.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was the work of the Hebrew prophets? their significance? Name the prophets of the preëxilic, the exilic, and the postexilic periods.

2. Show that the prophets often met opposition and persecution. According to tradition both Isaiah and Jeremiah suffered martyrdom. Why do the fathers kill the prophets and the sons build and adorn their tombs? Compare Matt. 23:29-31.

3. What were some of the methods used by the prophets? Why did they teach through symbolic action? What was the value of this method? What value do object lessons have today?

4. What does the passage in Ezek. 33:30-33 suggest about the reception of the prophet's message by the hearers?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. For the use of the word "prophet" to mean "spokesman" or "interpreter" see Ex. 4:16; 7:1. Note that the names

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"man of God" and "servant of God" or "of Jehovah" are applied to the prophet, I Sam. 9:6; Isa. 20:3, and elsewhere; "messenger," Isa. 44:26; "watchman," Ezek. 3:17; "seer" or "man of vision" (two words in the Hebrew), I Sam. 9:9; I Chron. 29:29.

2. Make a study of the language of the prophets, noting especially the figurative language in the books of Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

3. Look up the following references to the use of symbolism: Jer., chs. 13; 19:1-13; 43:8-13; Ezek. 4:1-13; 5:1-4; 12:1-6; 21:1-3, 14, 19-23; 24:15-17; 37:16-23; Zech. 11:4-17.

4. Make a study of the call and commission of the prophet, noting particularly Isa., ch. 6; Jer., ch. 1; Ezek., chs. 1-3.

CHAPTER XXI

A SURVEY OF THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS

The prophecies in the Old Testament arose out of particular historical situations and we understand much in them as we know Hebrew history and the conditions and environment of the author's own time. This information is to be found in other writings that have to do with the same definite period of history: the books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah being helpful, and also the prophetic writings of the same period as the prophetic book under consideration.

The Book of Jonah. Jonah prophesied in the early part of the reign of Jeroboam II concerning his successes in war, but this prophecy is not preserved in the Old Testament. II Kings 14:25. The Book of Jonah consists almost entirely of narrative — the story of Jonah at Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. The message of the book is of God's love for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, and of his willingness to forgive if they will turn from their evil way and repent.

The Book of Amos. Amos was a sheep raiser and shepherd, herdsman, and dresser of sycamore trees, his home being at Tekoa, about eleven miles south of Jerusalem. While a native of Judah, he prophesied in the Northern Kingdom, at Beth-el, ten miles north of Jerusalem, which, like Dan, was a royal sanctuary. The

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time was in the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II. Amos may have spoken in the Temple area on some great national feast day when people were assembled from every part of the kingdom. "As a woolgrower, however, Amos must have had his yearly journeys among the markets of the land; and to such were probably due his opportunities of familiarity with northern Israel, the originals of his vivid pictures of her town life, her commerce, and the worship at her great sanctuaries."¹ "Amos knew the world in which he lived, and the God whose laws he sought to lay upon the conscience of his people, and these are the two indispensable conditions of effective preaching."²

The Book of Hosea. Hosea, like Amos, prophesied in the Northern Kingdom, but was probably a native of that kingdom. The first three chapters of The Book of Hosea, like The Book of Amos, belong to the latter part of the reign of Jeroboam II, a time of material prosperity and internal corruption. The downfall of Jehu's dynasty is predicted. Hos. 1:4, 5; cf. II Kings 10:11. Hosea, chs. 4-14, belongs to the period of anarchy and civil war which followed Jeroboam's death. Hosea's prophetic career may have ended before the Syro-Ephraimitic War, 734 B.C., since there is no allusion to this event, nor to the deportation to Assyria mentioned in II Kings 15:29, though some authorities think that he lived to see the overthrow of Samaria in 722 B.C.

¹ G. A. Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets," Vol. I, page 79.

² J. E. McFadyen, "A Cry for Justice: A Study in Amos," page 20.

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Hosea, chs. 1-3, may be interpreted as follows: Hosea married Gomer, who became the mother of three children to whom he gave symbolical names. He loved Gomer, and thought that she was a good woman and a true wife. Later he discovered that she had been unfaithful to him. She deserted her husband, Hosea, abandoning home and children, and fell at last into slavery, from which he redeemed her and took her back to his home, forgiving her and hoping for her repentance. He still loved her and, as he meditated on the sad experience and asked the reason, he saw in the sorrow a lesson of Israel's sin against God. Why had sorrow entered his happy home and clouded his happy life? To teach him how good God was and how unfaithful Israel had been. Israel was treating Jehovah as Gomer had treated Hosea. But Jehovah felt towards Israel as Hosea felt towards his wife. Hosea believed that it was not an accident that had brought him through these experiences, but that it was God's way of revealing his greater love for Israel. As the prophet had taken Gomer back, so God was willing to forgive Israel, and to restore her to favor after she had undergone the stern disciplining which she needed. The impulse which led Hosea to marry Gomer was from God—this was the beginning of Jehovah's word to him. Hosea thus apprehended divine love through an actual experience in his own life. One should note that Jeremiah in the next century became convinced that Jehovah had spoken to him on a certain occasion only after a subsequent event had proved this to be the case. "Then I knew that this was the word of Jehovah." Jer. 32:8.

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The Book of Isaiah. Isaiah, a citizen and probably a native of Jerusalem, prophesied in Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Micah, who also prophesied in Jerusalem in the eighth century, was his younger contemporary. Isaiah gave symbolic names to his two sons, Shear-jashub, meaning "A remnant shall return," and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means "Spoil speedeth, prey hasteneth." There were "certain" great crises in the period of his ministry: the Syro-Ephraimitic War, 734 B.C., cf. Isa. 7:1-9:7; the captivity of the northern tribes and the fall of the Northern Kingdom, 722 B.C., cf. Isa. 28:1-6; the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib, king of Assyria; and the sudden deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C., cf. Isa., chs. 36; 37. Isaiah, Micah, Amos, Hosea, Jonah, Zephaniah, and Nahum are the prophets of the period when Assyria was the world power.

The Book of Micah. Micah, a native of a small town, Moresheth-gath, southwest of Jerusalem, prophesied in the eighth century B.C. in Jerusalem, beginning his prophetic work before the end of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C. His prophetic activity in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, is referred to in Jer. 26:17, 18; cf. Micah 3:12. Micah 1:10-16, describing the devastating march of the Assyrians through Judah and the fate of the cities near Micah's home, consists of a series of plays upon place names which was intended to strike forcibly the attention of the hearers. The picture of the invading army, Micah 1:10-16, should be compared with Isa. 10:28-32.

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The Book of Zephaniah. Zephaniah, a descendant possibly of King Hezekiah, was probably a native of Jerusalem and prophesied before Josiah's reformation, 622 B.C. At this time Scythian hordes from the distant north were sweeping over western Asia as far as Egypt and threatening Judah. See Jer., chs. 4-6.

The Book of Nahum. Nahum, probably a native of southern Judah, prophesied some time before the destruction of Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, in 612 B.C. The message of the book is the announcement of the downfall and destruction of the cruel and hated Assyrian power. "The Assyrians were masters in the art of war; they trod down the nations like dust, spread ruin and carnage through their lands, plundered their treasures, treated prisoners with savagery, and the dead with ignominy."³

The Book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk prophesied shortly before 600 B.C., during Jehoiakim's reign. The book opens with a dialogue between Habakkuk and Jehovah (cf. Jer., chs. 14; 15 and Micah, chs. 6; 7): Why does Jehovah permit disorder, wrong, and injustice in Judah? Hab. 1:1-4. Jehovah answers that he is raising up the Babylonians as his instrument for the punishment of the wicked. Ch. 1:5-11. But this produces a new difficulty in the prophet's mind. The Babylonians are cruel; conquest is the only motive of their terrible army. Why are they permitted to destroy those more righteous than themselves? Ch.

³ S. R. Driver, "The New Century Bible," Vol. II, "Minor Prophets," pages 8, 9.

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1:12-17. Judah is thus regarded in ch. 1:13 as relatively more righteous, i.e., in comparison with the Babylonians. The prophet finds his solution to the problem in the assurance that righteousness will finally triumph and pride will be punished. Ch. 2:1-4. Then follows a series of woes, ch. 2:5-20, expanding the thought of ch. 2:4, the certain destruction of the proud. The sins of the Babylonians are singled out. Hab., ch. 3, is a psalm.

The Book of Jeremiah. The Book of Jeremiah contains more material about its author's life than does any other of the prophetic books. Jeremiah prophesied from 627 B.C. until after 587 B.C., the fall of Jerusalem — a period of more than forty years. He was born about 650 B.C. of a priestly family in Anathoth, a village three miles northeast of Jerusalem. The main scene of his prophetic activity was Jerusalem. Jeremiah was the object of much persecution and was on many occasions in danger of his life from the men of his native place, Anathoth, Jer. 11:21; from priests and prophets, Jer. 26:8, 9; from King Jehoiakim, Jer. 36:19, 28; and from princes, Jer. 38:4. See also Jer. 18:18; ch. 20. After the fall of Jerusalem Jeremiah and his secretary or scribe, Baruch, were carried to Egypt against their will by refugee Jews. According to tradition Jeremiah was put to death in Egypt by his own countrymen.

After the defeat of Pharaoh-necho of Egypt by Nebuchadrezzar, 605 B.C., Jeremiah committed to writing the prophecies from 627 to 605 B.C. The following year Baruch, to whom the prophecies were dic-

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tated, read the contents of the roll in the hearing of the people assembled from all parts of the country at a fast in Jerusalem. The roll was brought to King Jehoiakim who, enraged at the contents, threw it into the fire. Jeremiah again dictated the contents of the roll to Baruch and there were added "many like words." Jer., ch. 36. This roll, the basis of the prophecies as we have them, contained the prophecies of the first twenty-three years of Jeremiah's ministry, reproduced with additions.

The Book of Daniel. Daniel was a Jewish captive at the court of Nebuchadrezzar in Babylon during the exilic period. The Book of Daniel is an apocalyptic production, characterized by the use of visions, symbols, and figures, cf. Isa., chs. 24-27; Joel. 3:9-21; Ezek., chs. 38; 39; Zech., chs. 12-14, and it consists of two parts, chs. 1-6, narrative in form, and chs. 7-12, a series of Daniel's visions.

The Book of Obadiah. The Book of Obadiah is the shortest of the prophetic books. Obadiah probably prophesied either in the exilic period or about 500 B.C., though his career has been also dated both 791 and 731 B.C. The subject of the book is the fate of Edom. For the feeling of antagonism between the Israelites and the Edomites, read Ps. 137:7; Isa., chs. 34; 35; 63:1-6; Lam. 4:21, 22; Ezek. 25:12-14; 35; Mal. 1:3, 4. At the time of the fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C., the Edomites openly exulted in the humiliation of the Jews and assisted the Babylonians. Obad. 10-14. Compare Obad. 1-10 with Jer. 49:7-22.

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The Book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel prophesied in Babylon 593–571 B.C. He was one of the exiles who was carried captive from Judah in 598. His familiarity with the technical details of the Temple and its ritual seems to show that the prophet had officiated as a priest for some time at the Jerusalem Temple, and that he had the training and education belonging to one in that position. His prophetic ministry was divided into two periods. The first ended with the commencement of the siege of Jerusalem, Ezek. 24:1, and the second period opened with the arrival in Babylonia of the news of the fall two years later. During the interval of time between the two periods, two years, Ezekiel did not preach publicly. Ezek. 24:27; 33:21, 22. In the first period he spoke of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem and the nation, and his message was one of reproof and denunciation. In the second period the prophet's message was one of comfort, encouragement, and inspiration for the future. He spoke of the restoration and regeneration of the people and occupied himself with the constructive work of proclaiming the ideals that should govern the formation of the new Israel. No prophecy is dated from 585 B.C., Ezek. 32:1, to 573 B.C., Ezek. 40:1.

The Books of Haggai and Zechariah. Haggai prophesied in Jerusalem in 520 B.C. In his four brief addresses, Hag., ch. 1; 2:1–9, 10–19, 20–23, he appeals to the exiles to rebuild the ruined Temple, and he speaks of the glory of the second Temple. Haggai and his contemporary Zechariah are mentioned in Ezra 5:1; 6:14.

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Zechariah was of priestly descent and prophesied in Jerusalem in 520 B.C. The theme of Zech., chs. 1-8, is the coming Messianic age and the necessity of moral reformation; chs. 9-14, the coming glory of Jerusalem and the destruction of the enemies of Jerusalem.

The Book of Malachi. Malachi prophesied in Jerusalem probably about 420 B.C., though the date 460-450 B.C. is also thought possible. Nehemiah was not governor when the prophecy was written, Mal. 1:8; Neh. 5:14, 15, 18. The prophet spoke against the same evils that are mentioned prominently in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah — marriages with foreign women and the neglect of the payment of tithes and other dues. The prophet rebuked not only the people but also the unfaithful priests who had presented inferior offerings. For the expectation that Elijah would appear again for the deliverance and restoration of Israel, see Mal. 4:5, 6; for the fulfillment by the coming of John the Baptist, Matt. 17:10-13.

The Book of Joel. Joel prophesied in Jerusalem, probably after the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. The prophecy may be assigned to the period 400-350 B.C. Some assign it to the ninth century B.C. The occasion of the message seems to have been a plague of locusts and a drought in which Joel saw a sign of the coming of the day of Jehovah, a day of judgment and restoration. Compare Joel 2:28-32 and Acts 2:17-21.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HEBREW PROPHETS: THE CHARACTER OF GOD

Jehovah the God of All Nations. Jehovah is the God of all nations and of all men, the ruler of the whole earth; his sovereignty is universal. Over all the nations, Israel and those surrounding, there is a universal moral law, and the nations are responsible to Jehovah for their acts. Syria, Philistia, Phœnicia, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and the Hebrew kingdoms are alike to be visited with judgment. Amos, chs. 1; 2. Moab is condemned because the Moabites burned the bones of the king of Edom, an act of impiety deliberately committed. All are responsible to Jehovah for their deeds. Jehovah demands of all righteousness and justice and kindness, and he will judge all, and most rigorously Israel to whom he has given remarkable privileges and responsibilities. Jehovah is a God with a righteous character, and he requires upright conduct. All must observe the laws of humanity, but Israel especially must be obedient and loyal since he has been in special covenant relation to her.

Jehovah directs the movements of world history and the nations are the instruments of his will. He is in all history. He has brought not only the Israelites out of the land of Egypt into Palestine but also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Aramæans, or Syrians, from Kir—two nations that carried on war against

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Israel. Amos 9:7. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah." He has chosen the Hebrew race especially, however, to make the supreme contribution of religion to the world; this is a unique privilege and great moral and spiritual obligation. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Amos 3:2. To his servants, the Hebrew prophets, he reveals his secret counsel. Amos 3:7.

The Assyrian is an instrument in Jehovah's hand to discipline and punish his own people, but Assyria will also be punished by the God of justice, for conquest and not the good of Israel has been the motive of the cruel armies of Nineveh. "Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation! . . . it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. . . . Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? shall the saw magnify itself against him that wieldeth it?" Isa. 10:5, 7, 15. Jehovah has appointed Nebuchadrezzar as his servant, to whom he has given dominion over the various nations. "And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant." Jer. 27:6. Cyrus, king of Persia, is the chosen agent of Jehovah to punish Babylonia and to show mercy to the Israelites in exile. "Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings; to open the door before him, and the gates shall not be shut: . . . for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast

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not known me. . . . I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me." Isa. 45:1, 4, 5. "He whom Jehovah loveth shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans." Isa. 48:14.

Jehovah the God of Love. The nature of Jehovah as revealed through Israel's history is love. Hosea employs three figures to suggest the greatness of this love: the love of husband and wife, Hos., chs. 1-3; the love of parent and child, Hos. 11:1-3; and the regard of the humane driver for his animals, Hos. 11:4. The husband loves his wife, even when she is unfaithful, and forgives her. The father teaches his son to walk, taking him up in his arms and caring for his bruises when he falls and hurts himself. The driver out of kindness lifts up the yoke on the jaws of the oxen to ease the strain, and puts food before them. God's love is the love of the father for the lost son, the love for sinners and willingness to forgive, the love that will not let the sinner go, infinite love. Jehovah is a God of mercy and loving-kindness, who is Father and Husband to Israel, a God who pities and cares for all, wanting all to repent and be forgiven. "Jehovah appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:3. To this love Israel formerly responded: "Thus saith Jehovah, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals; how thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown," Jer. 2:2. A woman may forget the child at her breast, she may not have compassion on her own son, "yea, these may forget," yet Jehovah

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will not forget Israel. Isa. 49:15. "I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel." Isa. 63:7. "For thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name: and the Holy One of Israel is thy Redeemer; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. . . . For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer." Isa. 54:5, 7, 8.

Jehovah's love is an all-embracing love which includes all men, not only Israel but also Israel's cruelest enemies. In The Book of Jonah we have a broad view of this limitless, unfailing, unchanging love. God cares for the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, even for the innocent children and the animals there, and takes delight in the repentance of the people. "And should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" Jonah 4:11.

"For the love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind."¹

Jehovah the God of Majesty, Holiness, Power.
In the account of Isaiah's call to the prophetic ministry

¹ Rev. Frederick W. Faber.

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we find that the vision brought out clearly the transcendent majesty and holiness of the exalted God. The glory of God fills the whole earth. "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. . . . Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts." Isa. 6:1-3, 5.

Jehovah is the Creator of the universe, and he is omnipotent. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. . . . All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity. . . . The everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Isa. 40:15, 17, 28-31. "Ah Lord Jehovah! behold, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thine outstretched arm; there is

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nothing too hard [wonderful] for thee." Jer. 32:17. "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens." Jer. 10:12; 51:15. "Seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth." Amos 5:8.

Jehovah alone is God and there is no other God beside him. The gods of the heathen do not exist; they are vanities. "Every goldsmith is put to shame by his graven image; for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, a work of delusion: in the time of their visitation they shall perish." Jer. 10:14, 15. "Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O Jehovah our God?" Jer. 14:22. "Shall a man make unto himself gods, which yet are no gods?" Jer. 16:20. "They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity; . . . He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire; and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." Isa. 44:9, 16, 17; cf. ch. 40:18-20.

Jehovah the Forgiving God. Jehovah is a God who will forgive and abundantly pardon. "Come now,

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and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. 1:18. "Thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isa. 44:21, 22. "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah." Isa. 55:6-8. "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Ezek. 36:25, 26. "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jer. 31:34.

Jehovah's House a House of Prayer for All Peoples. The Gentiles were welcomed as they came to join the Jews in their worship of the one true God. "Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and

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their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides his own that are gathered." Isa. 56:6-8. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart." Jer. 3:17. "O Jehovah, my strength, and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of affliction, unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Our fathers have inherited nought but lies, even vanity and things wherein there is no profit." Ch. 16:19.

Israel has been the victim of both Assyria and Egypt but the prophet is looking forward to a time when friendly worship together will be possible. "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Isa. 19:23-25. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45:22. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:9. "By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness,

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and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Isa. 45:23.

Very clearly we find in the teaching of the Hebrew prophets a pure ethical monotheism — the worship of the one true God, and the denial of the existence of all other gods. The prophets emphasized certain characteristics of God, laying stress on the moral character and nature of Jehovah. Jehovah is the God of all nations, the Ruler of the whole earth, majestic, omnipotent. He is a God of holiness and of love. He is a forgiving God. He welcomes Gentiles as well as Jews to his worship.

QUESTION FOR REVIEW

What was the character of Jehovah as revealed through the prophetic writings?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Read especially the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Malachi, and note the prophetic teaching in each book concerning the character of God.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HEBREW PROPHETS: MAN'S RELATION TO GOD AND TO FELLOW MAN

The prophets denounced the oppression of the poor by the rich, of the weak by the strong, as well as dishonesty, drunkenness, immorality, thoughtlessness, heartlessness, selfishness. They spoke against every form of injustice and unrighteousness. They recognized clearly and felt deeply the sinfulness of sin and they were unsparing in their condemnation of it. They rebuked wrong in no uncertain language.

Amos speaks against the self-indulgent women of the Northern Kingdom, calling them "kine of Bashan," or well-fed cattle, just as Isaiah denounces the frivolous and extravagant women of the capital city of Judah, Jerusalem, with their luxurious dress, daughters of Zion, who are "haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet," Isa. 3:16. Amos says to the women, "You oppress the poor, crush the needy, and ask your husbands to make money that you may enjoy yourselves." It is as if he said: "You are responsible for the misery of the poor even though you do not see them, do not know where they live, and have nothing to do with them. You do not ask at what cost your desires are gratified. You ought to know how the money you spend is made, and how the poor live, and what they need from you. You must not enjoy the

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luxuries secured by your husbands at the expense of social justice. God is surely going to punish you for your sins. He will also punish the rich men, your husbands, who are greedy and corrupt. Bribes are taken and injustice prevails in the courts. The holy name of God has been profaned by your impurity. You men of the upper classes in your palaces of hewn stone and inlaid ivory have stored up money and possessions acquired through violence and robbery. The many in the nation are ground down by poverty while the few have for their end in life luxurious living and ease. You lie upon beds of ivory, sprawl upon divans, eat the best of food, drink to excess, anoint yourselves with the choicest kinds of oil, but you do not concern yourselves with the condition of your country and the approaching calamity which threatens your nation. You are men who have lost all sense of right and wrong. The merchants sell adulterated goods and use short weights and measures, and the Sabbath is an unwelcome day because trade is suspended; you are anxious that it be over that you may be in your shops again to cheat your customers. Religion, you think, has little or nothing to do with business. My great ideal is that there shall be justice in the land. 'Let justice'—a great word in our century as in the eighth century before Christ—'roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.' "

Micah, prophesying in Jerusalem, says, in substance: "Woe to them who lie awake nights thinking up ways of robbing the poor, and when the morning is light, they carry out their plans because it is in the power of their hand. Their excuse is 'Might makes right.' They

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covet fields, and seize them, and houses, and take them away, and oppress a man and his home." "Is it not for you to know justice? ye who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron." Micah 3:1-3. In such vivid and scathing language Micah portrays the treatment in his time of the poor who are figuratively "devoured" as they are dispossessed by the land grabbers. "The women of my people ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their young children ye take away my glory for ever." Micah 2:9. "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us." Micah 3:10, 11. "Are there yet treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and a scant measure that is abominable? Shall I be pure with wicked balances, and with a bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth." Micah 6:10-12.

Micah knows that the people of Jerusalem as a class do not enjoy his message, and he knows the kind of prophet they would prefer. "If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people." Micah 2:11. Isaiah says,

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“For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.” Isa. 30:9, 10.

Isaiah speaks against those who are responsible for the welfare of the nation, Judah. “It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses: what mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor? saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts.” Isa. 3:14, 15. Woe unto the wealthy land-owners “that join house to house, that lay field to field”! “Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” Woe unto the drunkards who do not care for spiritual things, who acquit the guilty for a bribe and condemn the innocent — those who “rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands”! They are “mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!” Woe unto those who think sin will not be punished, who “draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope; that say, Let him . . . hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the

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counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" See Isa., ch. 5. "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write perverseness; to turn aside the needy from justice, and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey!" Isa. 10:1, 2. "Woe unto them that hide deep their counsel from Jehovah, and whose works are in the dark, and that say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" Isa. 29:15. The princes of Jerusalem "are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth bribes, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." Isa. 1:23.

Much of the religion in the time of the prophets, as is true in our own age, was formal. Amos tells his hearers that their sacrificial ceremonialism is useless, and that the religion of the great majority is mere outward, empty form. He says, in substance: "Your religion leads you away from God rather than to him. Your sanctuaries are crowded but your hearts are not surrendered. All kinds of offerings are brought in abundance, but God despises your feasts and does not accept your sacrifices. You proclaim upon the housetop your gifts to religion, but this pleases you, not him. You hate the prophets who reprove you for your sins, and even command them to refrain from prophesying. You have no understanding of God's workings through providence, no realization of his voice in natural events. You do not know the all-powerful, everywhere-present, all-knowing Ruler of the whole earth."

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Isaiah tells the people of Jerusalem that their abundant sacrifices at the Temple, their many festivals and great crowds at the Temple courts, even their many prayers do not please God while their hearts are evil and their conduct is wrong. "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and the sabbath, the calling of assemblies. — I cannot away with [endure] iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Isa. 1:11-15. They honor God with their words, but their heart is far from him: "This people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught them." Isa. 29:13.

Jeremiah denounces those in Judah who trust in the forms of religion, who think that the mere presence of the Temple in Jerusalem will save the city and its people from disaster. "Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah,

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are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, . . . Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name [the Jerusalem Temple], and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes"—a mere refuge from danger? Jer. 7:3-11.

Zechariah says that the fasts that have arisen in the period of exile to commemorate the calamities of Judah are mere external observances and no part of true religion. "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" Zech. 7:5. "Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart." Zech. 7:9, 10; cf. Isa. 58:5-9. "Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; . . . love no false oath: . . . love truth and peace." Zech. 8:16, 17, 19.

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The need of sincere repentance is emphasized by the prophets, who tell of God's love and willingness to forgive. With their knowledge of God's nature and character, they ask for a right attitude towards him and a right relation between man and man. Amos asks his hearers to "hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate" — above all to seek Jehovah, to "seek good, and not evil, that ye may live." Isaiah, speaking for Jehovah, pleads with his audience: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." Isa. 1:16-20. In Joel we read, "Saith Jehovah, . . . rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God." Joel 2:12, 13.

Micah answers in a wonderful way the questions: "Does God want primarily large and costly gifts to religion? Does he desire burnt offerings, abundance of olive oil, even the nearest and dearest, a human sacrifice?" "Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is

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good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:6-8. These are the essentials, the very essence of true religion. The demands are simple, but as difficult to-day as in Micah's time, more than twenty-five centuries ago.

Hosea says that there is no truth or goodness in the Northern Kingdom because there is no knowledge of God. God desires goodness and kindness, not sacrifice, and a knowledge of himself more than burnt offerings. Hos. 4:1; 6:6. This is not a theoretical knowledge but a practical knowledge, expressing itself in right living, and in a knowing and doing of the will of God. Josiah, the king of Judah, says Jeremiah, truly knew God, for he judged the cause of the poor and needy. "Was not this to know me? saith Jehovah." Jer. 22:16; cf. 9:23, 24. God delights in love — love for himself, and love of man for fellow man.

Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel emphasize personal moral responsibility. Each individual is directly responsible to God, and to be judged, and punished for wickedness and rewarded for righteousness, each for his own deeds, Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:20-24. Jeremiah makes much of the individual relation to God, the soul in fellowship with God. In his great message of the new covenant, he speaks of the inwardness of religion; the universal knowledge of God; and the forgiveness of sin — three characteristics which mark the new covenant. "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by

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the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." Jer. 31:31-34. Christ was thinking especially of the third characteristic, forgiveness of sin, which makes possible the other two, as he instituted the Lord's Supper: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." The Saviour's life and death made possible inwardness of religion, universal knowledge of God, and forgiveness of sin.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What sins did the Hebrew prophets speak against?
2. What message did the prophets have concerning formal religion?
3. What attitude, according to the prophets, should man have towards God?
4. What constructive message did the prophets have concerning man's relation to his fellow man?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Make a study of man's relation to God and to his fellow man as portrayed in the prophetic books.

CHAPTER XXIV

CHRIST AND THE FULFILLMENT OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

In the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament we find some wonderful portraits of the ideal ruler who is to come, and the ideal state or community that is to be established. The prophets' visions are of a new Israel in a new age when there will be no more sin. Looking forward they seek to usher in an era of righteousness and justice and holiness, of brotherly love and lasting peace and happiness, when each individual will love Jehovah with all his heart and soul and might. Many prophecies are filled with the hope of the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth, an ideal society ruled by a perfect King. Majestic titles are given to the coming Prince: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." Isa. 9:6, 7.

The reign of the righteous, victorious ruler of the line of David will be one of justice and peace: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and

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a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. 11:1-5, 9. In the future age an individual will be taken at his true value: "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in justice. And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The fool shall no more be called noble, nor the churl said to be bountiful. For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice profaneness, and to utter error against Jehovah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. And the instruments of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the meek with lying words,

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even when the needy speaketh right. But the noble deviseth noble things; and in noble things shall he continue," Isa. 32:1-8. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and confidence for ever." Isa. 32:17.

The deliverer will come forth out of Bethlehem of Judah, and the era inaugurated will be one of universal peace. "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5:2. The nations shall come to Jerusalem, and learn true religion and universal peace shall follow. "But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it." Micah 4:1-4; cf. Isa. 2:2-4.

Jeremiah tells of the coming of the "righteous

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Branch": "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called: Jehovah our righteousness." Jer. 23:5, 6; cf. ch. 33:15, 16.

The Servant Songs, Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12, find their only satisfactory interpretation and complete and real fulfillment in Christ Jesus, though they picture the Jewish nation personified and idealized, or the faithful, pious remnant or portion of the Jewish people, the true Israel, which as Jehovah's missionary is to teach the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles, and make Jehovah known to the nations. Israel has been chosen as Jehovah's Servant to give to the world the knowledge of the one God and to bring his salvation to the world. The Servant will overcome the difficulties which attend his ministry: "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law." Isa. 42:1-4. The Servant will be a light to the nations: "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the

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earth," Isa. 49:6. Suffering and humiliation are involved in the Servant's work: "The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off my hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Isa. 50:5, 6.

In Isa. 52:13-53:12 we find the ideal of the perfect Servant of Jehovah which Christ so wonderfully fulfilled. The righteous Servant is not suffering because of his own personal guilt—the Sinless One's suffering is due to the sins of others—but through deep humiliation and suffering the Servant triumphs. His sufferings will be the means of bringing salvation to the world! "Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. . . . He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. . . . And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his

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mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities." Isa. 52:13; 53:3-7, 9-11. Christ Jesus embodied this ideal of Jehovah's Servant in himself as he established true religion in all the world, gave to us the revelation of the heavenly Father and his will and way of life, and vicariously suffered for us, the innocent for the guilty.

The prophets were evangelists, bearers of good news, as from age to age they declared God's purpose and announced the glad tidings of his power to save. Their evangelism was a preparation for the good news of a later time when God sent his Son, Immanuel, "God with us," to reveal more fully his character. "In the fullness of the times the Christ came, gathering up into himself and uniting in his own Person all those lines of prophecy which had seemed so strangely inconsistent and irreconcilable, filling them with a new meaning, vivifying them with a new energy. Here was the answer to all men's hopes; nay, vastly more; a combination, unique, unthought of, beyond the boldest venture of faith and hope to anticipate, needing the humblest teachableness to receive when offered for acceptance."¹

Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One.

¹ A. F. Kirkpatrick, "The Doctrine of the Prophets," page 321.

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the ideal King establishing a spiritual Kingdom, "not of this world," the Kingdom of God, "the rule of God in human hearts and lives," a universal Kingdom for all people united in service. To him are given the nations for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Psalm 2. Before him shall all kings fall down; all nations shall serve him. Psalm 72. Christ was the suffering Servant, wounded and bruised for the transgressions and iniquities of mankind — an ideal priest, cf. Psalm 110, offering himself as victim for the world. Christ was the greatest of the prophets, the ideal prophet, cf. Deut. 18:18, as he preached good tidings to the poor, proclaimed the release of captives, restored "sight to the blind," and set "at liberty them that are bruised," Luke 4:18. He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but in his own way to fulfill. Through Christ, the Founder of the new covenant, the prophecies of the Old Testament were filled with new and deeper significance and larger and more wonderful meaning.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What do the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament tell us about the ideal ruler who was to come, and the ideal community that was to be established?
2. Make a study of the Servant Songs in The Book of Isaiah.
3. Show that Christ Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Make a study of the Old Testament and note the passages that foretell the ideal future and the coming of the Messiah.

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